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THE
ARMENIANS
IN THE
MEDIEVAL
ISLAMIC WORLD

PARADIGMS OF INTERACTION
SEVENTH TO FOURTEENTH CENTURIES

Volume Two

Armenian Realpolitik in the Islamic World and Diverging Paradigms
Case of Cilicia: Eleventh to Fourteenth Centuries

SETA B. DADOYAN



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I dedicate this book to my family, Arsen, Talin, and Daniel,
and to my ancestors,
the Barsoumians from the east and the Yaylayans
from the west of the Armenian World

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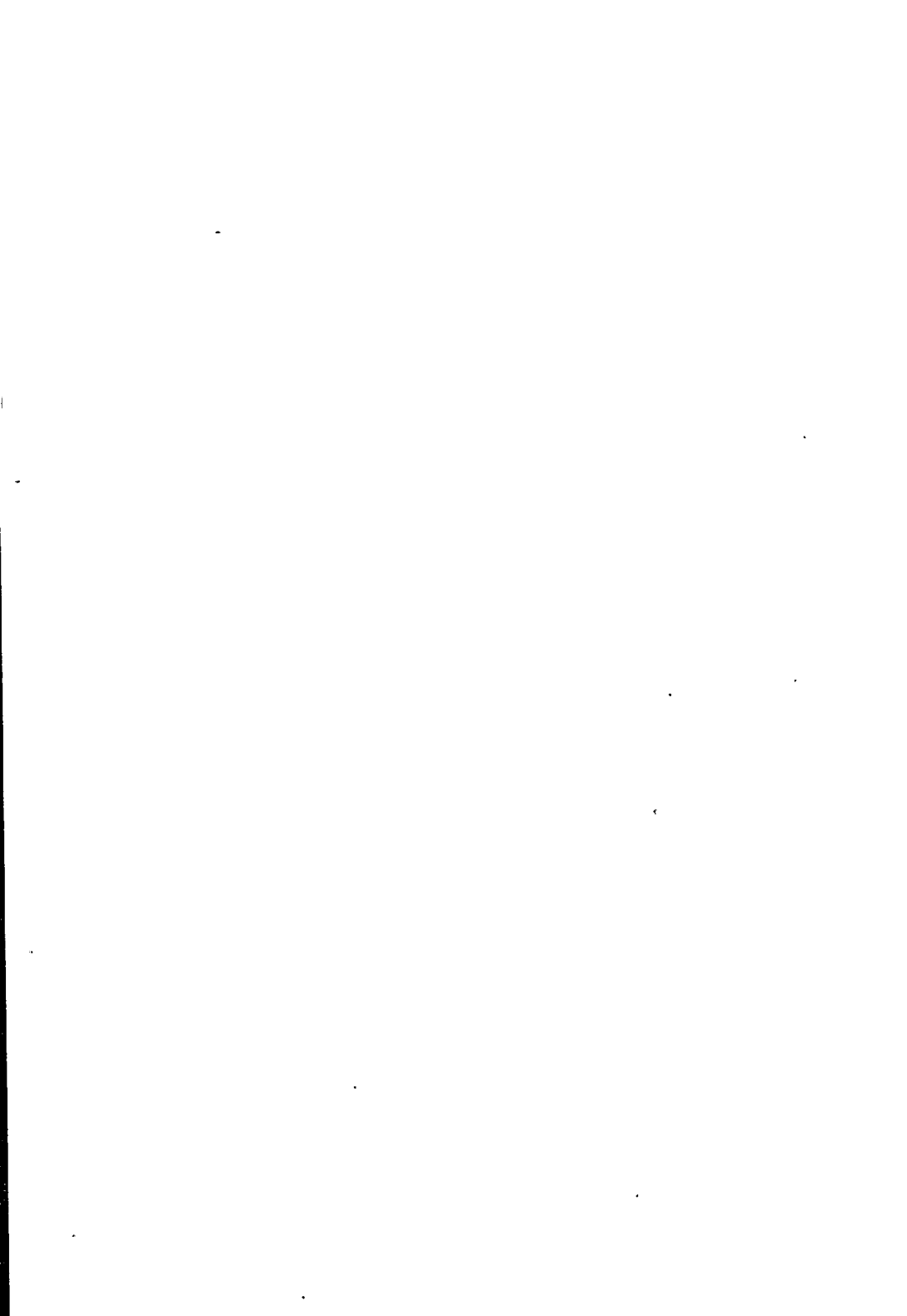
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11. Forbidding Wine as *Haram* (forbidden)
12. Considering Washing with Water Purification of Sins
13. Despising Armenians for not Being Circumcised
14. Refusing to Apply the Fast of both the Old and New Laws
15. Banning the Meat of Animals Slaughtered by Armenians
16. Considering Us Infidels, while Being such Themselves

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ا	ā	ط	t
ب	b	ظ	z
ت	t	ح	‘
ث	th	خ	gh
ج	j	ف	f
هـ	h	ق	q
خ	kh	ك	k
د	d	ل	l
ذ	dh	م	m
ر	r	ن	n
ز	z	هـ	h
س	s	و	ū
ش	sh	ي	ī
ص	ṣ	ع	‘
ض	ḍ		

Hübschmann-Meillet Transliteration

Hübschmann-Meillet	Sound: East. Arm/West. Arm	Armenian Letter
a	a	ա
b	b/p	բ
g	g/k (as in Gabriel/Ken)	գ
d	d/t	դ
e	ye/ye (as in yard)	ե
z	z (as in <u>z</u> ink)	զ
ē	e (as in <u>a</u> ir)	ի
ě	e (as in teach <u>e</u> r)	ը
t’	t/t (strong, as in <u>t</u> ab)	թ
ž	zh (as in French Jacques)	ժ
i	i/i (as in K <u>i</u> m)	ի

Hübschmann-Meillet Transliteration

l	l/l (as in <u>l</u> abel)	l
x	kh/kh (as in Ri <u>ch</u> ter)	խ
c	ts/dz (as in He <u>rz</u> og)	ծ
k	k/g (as in ca <u>p</u> /goal)	կ
h	h (as in <u>h</u> am)	հ
j	dz/tz (as in Pi <u>zz</u> a)	ձ
ł	gh/gh (as in Ba <u>gh</u> dad)	ղ
č	ch/j (as in ja <u>m</u>)	ճ
m	m/m (as in <u>m</u> ap)	մ
y	h/h (not spelled at the end of words)	յ
n	n/n (as in <u>n</u> ame)	ն
š	sh/sh (as in <u>sh</u> op)	շ
o	o or vo (as in <u>v</u> ortex)	ո
č'	ch/ch (as in <u>ch</u> op)	չ
b	p/b (as in pu <u>b</u> /bo <u>o</u> k)	պ
ǰ	dj/ch (as in jo <u>b</u> /cho <u>p</u>)	ջ
ř	r/r (strong as in <u>R</u> obert)	ր
s	s/s (as in Sa <u>m</u>)	ս
v	v/v (as in va <u>u</u> lt)	վ
t	t/d (as in ta <u>i</u> lor/ <u>d</u> oor)	տ
r	r (light as in Tu <u>r</u> ner)	ր
c'	ts/ts (as in He <u>rz</u> egovina)	ց
w	u/u (light v used to produce French 'u')	ւ
p'	p/p (strong p as pa <u>s</u> s)	փ
k'	k/k (strong k as in <u>k</u> een)	ք
ō	o/o (as in <u>o</u> pen)	օ
f	f/f (as in <u>f</u> ork)	ֆ

Western Armenian proper names of persons are written in the Western Armenian transliteration system, and not the Hübschmann.

Prologue

My initiative to study the Armenian experience in the medieval Islamic world through paradigmatic cases of interaction takes its beginnings from the Armenian condition in the Near Eastern region. It is best explained by Nietzsche's dictum *sum ergo cogito*, "I exist therefore I think." Existential in many respects, this questioning is also its motive and inner dimension. In this perspective, writing about the history of Armenians in the medieval Islamic world means trying to make sense of the circumstances. It means an effort to create/define, rather, to re-create/redefine the historicity of experiences. Being Armenian, almost universally, is having a mobile line of ethnic ancestry that is laden with narratives from the vast historic Armenian *oikoumenē* or habitat from Iran to Constantinople and from the Caucasus to Egypt. This study reflects, then, a questioning that a minimal level of concern about my Armenological Dasein, or my being an Armenologist requires. The condition of my generation of the 1960s, in particular, meant growing up in trilingual and pluricultural communities in ancient cities of mosques, churches, *suks*, local and missionary schools, and eastern/western ideologies and folklores. Above all, it meant carrying a heavy luggage of vaguely perceived legacies, while learning/living in local and cosmopolitan networks of relations.

However, these and many other factors are not causes for crises, as long as one takes the environment as the ground of identity, no matter how compounded and peculiar it is. In other words, the Armenian condition in Near Eastern countries is not problematic in itself; it becomes so when isolated in a small enclosure such as the glass pyramid of the Louvre. Space/time takes the shape of the pyramid as opposed to and separated from outer space and real time. As far as the pyramid is concerned, the narrative of the classic histories is also a value theory or the "ethics" of being an Armenian. However, in real space/time, this ethics lacks grounds in lived sensibilities, and epistemological criteria for its credibility. This is when the Armenian

condition becomes problematic, the scholarship in the pyramid a parody, and one's existence an unresolved matter. I existed and still do in these circumstances; therefore, I must think, at least to clear the Armenian psyche of sedimentations and fixities.

As of the inception of this work more than a decade ago, and throughout, the objective was to create a broad, inclusive, and definitely critical revaluation of the Armenian condition in the medieval Near East from the advent of Islam to the end of the Mongol period. For its proximity to the lived and recorded experiences, this new study/analysis of the Armenian condition had to be solid enough to stand out as an aesthetically more realistic, historically more accurate, philosophically more consistent, and intellectually more intriguing account.

For a task of these requirements, the key was to identify the problematic aspects of the traditional narratives and constructs in circulation for centuries. I did not have to go too far or search too long to find episodes and texts that served as paradigm cases for a different historicity, even a counter-history.

Contrary to mainstream accounts, Armenian history is far from being monolithic. Several and often contradictory trends went into its making, yet the images in the narratives failed to reflect its rich texture and dynamics. Armenian–Islamic history—as a case study—was just one way of dealing with the problem. In addition, the objective of my interest in the so-called sects is to draw the historicity of Armenian dissidence and the revolutionary elements on all strata and phases. The initiative to see these elements as a part of the whole is novel and for some, even controversial. Surely, the book is not about interactions through dissident channels, but dissidence was a channel of interaction. In addition, this book does not focus on the dissident aspect of Armenian history, because that would betray its holistic logic.

The same can be said about the so-far marginalized question of Muslim Armenians. Their case is not a highlight but just a part of the general argument to look at Armenian history from as many perspectives as possible. Several other subjects in the book, in turn discovered or brought up for the first time, demonstrate the multidimensional and interactive nature of the Armenian experience in the medieval Islamic and wider world. Things could have been—as they, in fact, were—very different than imagined, desired, and told in traditional narratives. This is as much a historical as a deeply existential and epistemological issue, and it is central to a project as ambitious as this book.

I began pondering over the extraordinary channels of interaction and their significance in Armenian history many years ago. I was a graduate student majoring in philosophy when I discovered that an obscure thirteenth-century Armenian manuscript was, in fact, a summary of the esoteric Epistles of the Brethren of Purity of the tenth century.

The broader project matured during a long period, because I was venturing into uncharted territory. There were no studies, and the task was hard, multifaceted, and dangerous but challenging and overdue. The tools were an interdisciplinary training, a critical approach, and a taste for dialectics. After two decades of research, the publication of two books, and several papers on the theme of Armenians and Islam, the opus came together as an “argument” based on and structured by hitherto unnoticed or marginalized paradigm cases. Each one of these cases raised new questions and revealed new patterns of interaction and evolution in the medieval Near East.

The new knowledge that I excavated will hopefully lead to fresh ways and areas of inquiry in Near Eastern as well as Armenian studies. In its intent and rather unconventional content, this book is also a prolegomenon to writing Armenian history in the context of the Near East and also to reviewing Near Eastern things in their interactive aspects. It is supposed to suggest new outlooks and re-assessments in Islamic histories as well.

At this point, a few notes about the method, the selection of sources, and the structure or the aesthetics of the book are in order. The selection and use of sources were based on the necessities of the initial objectives, as stated earlier. The essential was the arrangement of a very large amount of data for a composition that, by its making, presented a new account of Armenian as well as Near Eastern things. In the case of Armenian sources, the focus was on primary Armenian sources. In the case of Arab sources, naturally all basic primary sources and texts were utilized. In fact, most of the arguments and narratives are based precisely on their testimony.

In all detailed narratives, and there are many, the objective was to draw a general context for the reader to understand and have a feel of the period and the argument/s. The sources were selected in this light. Therefore, to keep the framework straightforward—especially for the reader who is not familiar with Armenian and/or Islamic history—I avoided debates on specific issues. This is not a detective’s initiative or report, and I am well aware of what some call “scholarship out there.”

I also deliberately avoided unnecessary bibliographic "embellishment," if the material did not contribute to or was actually used in the work. Already a very long and complicated text of many strands of arguments, this book could not carry parallel tracks of information. On the other hand, I have intentionally made use of certain details and ideas of relatively old sources such as Gibbon. This was to highlight a point, sometimes humorously, or open different channels of thought/ imagination for the reader. After all, similar to all writing and reading, historical writing also is an aesthetic activity even when it carries critical thinking and analysis.

Since making causal connections was essential to the process of deriving and drawing the historicity of otherwise isolated and/or undetected paradigm cases/trends over seven centuries, the sequence of the episodes was an essential part of building the arguments. A chronological approach was the most appropriate means to construct the blocks and arrange the paradigms in the clearest possible composition. A thematic classification not only would have been confusing but would have also seriously impaired the conceptual structure of the work.

A comment should be made about the multiplicity of themes and the content. The great range of interrelated themes may have justified a single and a very large volume. It would have been architecturally more coherent, but the sequence and content of six parts made the division to three volumes so much more accessible and practical. The reader, however, should read the volumes as the parts of a whole. The essential for me was the shaping and illustrating, or the grounding of arguments through paradigmatic cases. From the Prologue of Volume One to the end of Volume Three, a central argument and corollaries bridge the various episodes and issues.

The style in organizing the text and the problem of details should also be commented on. In view of my dialectical-holistic approach, also the objectives and the nature of the study, I did not and could not implement the common technique of maintaining a flowing narrative and keeping the details in the footnotes. Personally, I do not particularly enjoy reading texts of this style and, in turn, avoid imposing double levels of attention on the reader. The details are not just for information and evidence, as most traditionally trained historians take them to be. Details are a part of the story and the argument/s and if they have no relevance to the central themes, they should be excluded. As in Flemish and much later photo-realist arts, the fine details are *trompe*

l'oeil elements to draw the viewer/reader into the “reality” of the work. In other words, these details are necessary, not just as evidence but also to assist the viewer/reader to try to think from within the narrative. Indeed, I write as Chuck Close paints his very large portraits. The fine hair and minutest details on a face are not information; Matisse could tell a big tale with two or three strokes of the brush or with charcoal. Details are elements in a symphonic interaction with an image that is a construction or a composition anyway. This is my style of writing history and naturally, it is shaped by the idea of the opus. Every piece of literature—including and especially a historical writing—is an artifact of sorts. It is a composition of many elements that are deliberately arranged in deliberate forms, order, sequence, proportion, dimension, detail, highlight, intensity, lines, colors, and so on. As in the arts as well, seemingly odd elements contribute to the making of the whole. Even though in a good piece of literature and art, form, content, and subject are ideally one; form is always the key to the latter. I have composed and arranged the larger subjects and their subthemes in such a way as to create an open yet dynamic historic continuity that is closer to the Armenian condition and, as such, more intriguing. By its intent, form, and content, the book will hopefully stimulate a process of reevaluating everything, including itself, and reconceptualizing Armenian and Near Eastern histories.

Introduction

Volume Two is central to the book and generally the subject of Armenian–Islamic interactive history.

In fact, this study had its genesis in the challenge posed by the “baffling phenomenon,” as my mentor Professor Kamal Salibi put it, of what I called the “Fāṭimid Armenians.” Even more baffling and almost unstudied was the larger question of the Armenian condition in and as a part of the medieval Islamic world, in and outside the traditionally recognized Armenian homeland.

Much earlier, I began following “unorthodox” paths of inquiry into things Armenian, when as a graduate student I almost stumbled on a discovery. I traced the sources of a thirteenth-century Armenian manuscript in an esoteric Islamic source (the Epistles of the Brethren of Purity or *Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'*). The Ismā'īlī connection was a missing link and led to the study of militant heterodox Armenian factions in Upper Mesopotamia and al-Shām, the Fāṭimid Armenians, and, in general, an Armenian *Realpolitik* during the Seljuk and Crusader periods from the tenth to the thirteenth centuries. I gradually came to realize that just as Muslim–Armenian power in the Islamic world was an aspect and product of this realpolitik, so was the rise of an “orthodox” Armenian state in Cilicia just another aspect of the same realpolitik, this time with the Latin Crusaders. Political ideals varied, but the style and mentality were the same and the period must have been taken as a singularity, but was not. This was a new perspective toward the Armenian experience in the medieval Near East, at least. Not only the panorama of these two centuries was fascinating but also the circumstances, courses of action, the peculiarities of peoples' behavior, and many more related details were surprisingly new and intriguing. I can only hope that the reader will have as much enjoyment as I had during the research and writing of this volume.

One of the basic arguments in Chapter 1 of this volume is that during most periods of their history, Armenians made alliances with

and/or fought against all the powers and factions in the region. Rarely, ideology gained priority over interest. The Armenian realpolitik is definitely a very useful paradigm; even for contemporary history in all parts of the Armenian habitat. However, it is also a controversial concept, because it negates the puristic claims in the traditional perception of Armenian history. The blunt pragmatism of many Armenian figures and factions of these times, at least, defies idealistic models of what is called "Armenian identity." The two centuries between the mid-tenth and late-twelfth centuries were periods of great political landslides and flooding, as it were, in the entire region. As the Arabs lost ground, Byzantium moved slowly to the east and south into al-Shām, while the Ghuzz and Turkic tribes began appearing in the region. The Armenian dynastic territories and nobility were receding, and the extra-establishment and often heterodox Armenian element made the most of the chaos. On the Borderlands between Byzantium and the 'Abbāsids, also in al-Shām and Egypt, they gained political significance. The Turkish Period had begun earlier, yet symbolically, the fall of Manazkert (or Manzikert) in 1071 was a turning point in their favor. However, already a few decades before this spectacular Byzantine defeat, Armenians of heterodox and extra-establishment backgrounds were gaining positions of power both on the Borderlands and in the Islamic world, in general.

The first three chapters of this volume also deal with the circumstances and tools of acquiring power, the social classes involved in these processes, the cultural environments within which they functioned, political alliances, geographic locations, patterns of interacting and manipulating Islam as well as Christianity, and, above all, the peculiar perceptions of ethnicity and national loyalties. These are only some of the intriguing aspects of this phase when the peripheries of the Armenian habitat drastically expanded from the Black Sea to the Caspian, northwestern Iran, and in the south from the Cilician Gates to the Amanus, al-Shām, and Egypt. They acted in new environments and in direct contact with many other peoples and political cultures. The arrival of the Turkic tribes and then the Crusaders served as decisive factors in social-cultural change, and the Armenians made alliances with them as well. These events coincided with the beginnings of urbanization. Armenian-Turkish and Armenian-Islamic—particularly Ismā'īlī realpolitik (in Fāṭimid Egypt as well)—during this period matched Armenian-Frankish realpolitik in Cilicia (discussed in Chapters 4 and 5).

This period also saw major changes in class structure. The old nobility receded and a new dominant class emerged from the heterodox and modest factions that had a chance to be militarized and politicized. A new urban “bourgeoisie” of sorts rose in the newly rising cities along with the warlords and territorial masters. In addition, the church lost some of its political–economic significance.

Armenian expansion and political activity in the region culminated in a great number of principalities, territorial lordships, kingdoms, and vizierial powers (as in Fāṭimid Egypt). Instead of total political collapse, as believed and discussed in many histories of these times, what occurred during these two centuries was a fragmentation and a breakdown of Armenian political–cultural energy into new and dynamic patterns and institutions. As extra-establishment and heterodox factions and figures became a part of Near Eastern politics, legitimacy became a relative matter. Furthermore, as many of the traditional fixities—such as the so-called *loyalties* of the Armenian Classical Age (or the fifth century)—dissipated and dichotomies between orthodoxy and heresy blurred, because the institutions that defined these lines either receded or were dismantled. New loyalties and alliances were made with both Christian and Muslim sides free from institutional constraints. There were Latin and Chalcedonian Armenians, just as there were Sunnī, Shīʿī, and Ismāʿīlī Armenians. Armenian expansion and military–political activity took intriguing patterns and reached unprecedented levels.

Between 1060 and 1080, and almost simultaneously, there appeared at least five Muslim–Armenian powers: the Dānishmandids in Capadocia, the Bēnē Boghusaks in Sewawerak/Severek (just northeast of Samosata on the Euphrates), Philaretus from Germanica to Antioch, the Nāwīqīs (or the Awāqīs) in al-Shām, and the Fāṭimid Armenians in Egypt. In addition, there were paramilitary groups and small concentrations in many locations. The settlement of the Rubenids in Cilicia also comes in this context and is studied as such. The Armenian Period, rather century in Fāṭimid Egypt, produced a fascinating series of patterns of interactions with Islam. As mentioned, one of the most peculiar and rich phases in Armenian and Near Eastern history was practically lost to Armenian scholarship.

As discussed in Chapter 4, during the twelfth to fourteenth centuries, what may be called a “dynastic triangle,” or a “Second Age of Kingdoms” came about this time at the hands of “orthodox” Armenians but from outside the traditional nobility. Gradually, an Armenian urban

class developed in the entire Armenian habitat under the Muslims and/or whoever was in power, and in perfect accord with the authorities. Naturally, the condition of rural Armenians was always very different in every respect. In general, conversion was beneficial, and many chose Islam as an alternative religious culture and a way of life. Hyphenated identities are not new and already in the tenth century, hyphenations became realities for Armenians. Historical thinking in terms of dichotomies has lost grounds. There are no bases for exclusions and/or inclusions in mainstream histories, and only a holistic approach will do justice to any phenomenon or episode in the history of Armenians in the Islamic world. Seemingly contradictory details are a part of the same dynamic and rich texture of medieval as well as modern Armenian history, which traditional narratives impoverished beyond recognition.

During the thirteenth century, this dynastic triangle developed in the midst of the Franks, Mamlûks, Seljuks, Georgians, Ayyûbids, and Mongols. Cilicia was in the southwest, the Georgian–Armenian Zak'arids were in the east, and Erzinjân/Erznka was in the north of Cilicia (under the Armenian bishop of the city and his descendants). The situation had many peculiarities and implications. First, it meant that Armenians were everywhere from Cappadocia to the east, south, and north, and in close contact with all the other peoples and powers. Next, this time around, the makers/rulers of these dynastic territories were from the military, with the exception of Erznka. The new nobility in these new locations had greater military prowess and knowledge of the region and the common people, and each group or figure had its own style and choices. Cilician and Zak'arid political cultures and styles in dealing with the political environment were very different from those of the traditional dynastic houses. Even though the culture of Erznka was closer to Cilicia than to the east, it, nevertheless, was more cosmopolitan and closer to Islamic civilization than the latter. The Armenians in the east saw themselves as more “authentic” and “orthodox” than their southwestern compatriots, whereas the Cilicians who, because of their peculiar conditions, created what is known as the Silver Age of Armenian culture and raised the standards of intellectual and artistic production to very high levels.

The diverging paradigms of this second age of kingdoms have not been studied in traditional historiography as aspects of a specific period; and discussions are often limited to narrations of isolated Armenian microcosms, as it were, such as Cilicia, Zak'arid Armenia,

perhaps, Erzinka, and so on. Interactions between the various limbs of the Armenian habitat on the one hand and the regional powers on the other are novel paradigms of realpolitik and cosmopolitanism.

Three hundred years of Cilician realpolitik between and with the Latin–Byzantine west and the Zankī–Ayyūbid–Mamlūk–Mongol east, the subject of Chapters 4 and 5, are such examples. Looked at from a holistic perspective, seemingly paradoxical episodes were, in fact, characteristic of these times. Within Cilician history itself, the project of a Latin–Armenian kingdom found a powerful antithesis in Cilician Prince Mleh’s Zankī–Armenian kingdom, which, in fact, laid the foundations for the former. During these times, there were very intriguing moments and cases. For example, in 1172, while Mleh was leading Turkish troops against the Christian Greeks and Franks, Nersēs Šnorhali was chairing a church union council with the Greeks and Syrians at Hromkla on the Euphrates (just outside the borders of Cilicia in Muslim-controlled territory), and the Armenians of Egypt were being persecuted by Šalāḥ ed-Dīn, whose entourage included many Armenians. His target was Cilicia, then under Mleh, the pro-Zankī Rubenid prince married to a Turkmen–Armenian Nāwīkī lady. Earlier on, during the late 1150s and the early 1160s, as Cilician prince T’oros was taking part in the Crusader expeditions into Muslim lands—hoping to establish a Latin–Armenian kingdom—another famous Armenian, the Imāmī vizier Ṭalā’ī Ibn Ruzzīk in Fāṭimid Egypt was offering his services and large armies of mostly Muslim Armenians to Zankī Nūr ed-Dīn to drive the Crusaders or the “infidels” out of Muslim lands. In the context of Fāṭimid–Armenian history, one may legitimately ask whether the Arabic poetry of Fāṭimid Armenians, and that of Ṭalā’ī in particular, should be considered a part of Armenian literature as well, as it was written by an Armenian. Does this literature fall in the tradition of modern authors such as William Saroyan, who was an American–Armenian? One may also wonder whether we should initiate a study of Ṭalā’ī’s poetry as an Arab and/or an Egyptian–Armenian. I am aware that the comparison is problematic, because the categories of ethnicity, identity, national catastrophe, displacement, and the like did not exist in the medieval periods referred to. However, the exclusion of the entire phenomenon of Armenians outside the so-called *native lands* is equally problematic if not more. In the eyes of the Muslims, these figures and factions were simply *armans*, even after centuries of their migration. They considered themselves “Armenian” with no scruples about the absence of language

and faith. There is new material to be studied and analyzed at least for anthropologists as well as the historians themselves.

In the southwest of the historically defined Armenian homeland between the shores of the Mediterranean and enclosed by mountain ranges, Cilician Armenians interacted with Crusaders, other Europeans, Arabs, Greeks, Turks, Ayyūbids, Mamlūks, and Mongols. These conditions were bound to generate a newer, more open, and complex culture that was very different from that of the Armenians in the east. Philosophically realistic, theologically ecumenical, and politically pragmatic, this culture was also modernized to a large extent, and it was the single-most significant equivalent of the European Late Gothic and Proto-Renaissance culture in the Near East. On the crossroads of medieval Christian and Muslim civilizations and politics, the Cilicians were the first among the Christians of the East who developed genuinely ecumenical tendencies. These peculiarities grew out of the Cilician condition in a geographic spot where east and west, north and south interacted closely and often violently. Subsequently, Cilician culture became the matrix for the development of western Armenian intellectual and political traditions. This is a major aspect of the Cilician case. Chapter 5 deals with the spiritual and intellectual legacy of Cilicia. Church union negotiations, new outlooks on theology, philosophy, sciences, art, and literature are some of the themes. Had circumstances been different during the Ottoman period in the region, a true Armenian renaissance would have materialized in Cilicia.

Bilād al-Shām in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries and the Armenian Intermezzo

I. The Armenian Intermezzo: Argument for the Classification of the Period as a Unique Phase

The two centuries starting from the 970s to the end of the twelfth century constitute a distinct phase and should be studied as a singularity. This Armenian *Intermezzo* of sorts developed sometime between the gradual loss of semi-autonomy on the traditional mainland and the rise of the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia in 1198. Armenian military-political activity, by the orthodox, extra-establishment and heterodox factions, acquired intriguing patterns and reached unprecedented levels. If approached as a vast and chaotic accumulation of events—as has been done so far, by and large—a very significant and the most interesting segment of Near Eastern history and surely Armenian history will be lost for scholarship.

This period was marked by a series of consecutive developments: Byzantine campaigns in eastern Asia Minor and some parts of al-Shām; Arab withdrawals; the fall of Armenian dynastic rule in historic Armenian territories and the annexation of these territories to Byzantium; massive Armenian deportations/migrations to the west and south of the mainland; the penetration of Turkic tribes; the fall of Manazkert; the rise of Seljuk kingdoms; and the arrival of the Crusaders and the rise of their kingdoms. The immediate and most obvious consequence of these changes for the Armenians was the creation of new habitats in the heart of the Islamic world. There were Armenians around the Tigris, al-Jazirah (in northeastern Syria), northern Mesopotamia, west of the Euphrates, Cilicia, Antioch, the valley of the Orontes River, the entire al-Shām and Palestine, Egypt, and further west in North Africa.

Territorial principalities and militant communities of many kinds appeared everywhere in these regions. One of the least studied aspects of this phase was that the lords of the new Armenian enclaves in the midst of Byzantine, Arab, Turkish, and soon Crusader lands were not from the nobility but from military and heterodox backgrounds. In other words, at the social level, this period was distinguished by both the disruption of the earlier social structures and the development of new ones characterized by different political cultures and manners of interaction with regard to both the Muslims and other Christians.

As of the last quarter of the tenth century, Armenians began spreading over a vast area and much closer than earlier on to Muslim peoples. They often interacted with their environment outside the traditional institutions of the Church and nobility, and were free from the policies and criteria related to these structures. There was a breakdown and also a fragmentation of Armenian political-cultural energy into more dynamic patterns and institutions. Political power was also in the hands of extra-establishment figures and factions, such as the militant Paulician-T'ondrakians, and the remnants of the cavalry or the freemen (*azats*) of the nobles, who had either migrated or were simply marginalized. Many Chalcedonian Armenians were in the service of the Byzantine armies. These were left on their own, by the full knowledge and consent of Constantinople, to guard the eastern frontiers of the Byzantine Empire.

Furthermore, some of the least noticed aspects of this phase were the questions of legitimacy and identity. As extra-establishment and heterodox factions and figures acquired roles in Near Eastern politics, legitimacy was a relative matter. Dichotomies between orthodoxy and heresy were blurred, because the institutions that defined these lines either receded or were dismantled. New and shifting alliances were made with all sorts of Christians and Muslims, and transitions into other religious-political cultures were inevitable and often beneficial. As mentioned, alongside orthodox Armenians, there were Latin and Chalcedonian Armenians, just as there were Muslim and heterodox Armenians. The question of Armenian identity at this time still awaits serious analysis.

It is rarely noticed that during the two decades between 1060 and 1080, and almost simultaneously, there appeared at least five Muslim-Armenian powers: the Dānishmandids in Cappadocia, the Bēnē Boghusaks in Sewawerak/Severek (just northeast of Samosata on the Euphrates), the land of Philaretus from Germanica to Antioch,

the Nāwīqīs/Awāqīs in al-Shām and Palestine, and the Fātimid Armenians in Egypt. In addition, there were Armenian mercenaries and small concentrations in fortresses at more than a dozen locations. The appearance of the Rubenids in Cilicia was a part of this phase and not an isolated and “purely” Armenian episode.

Another major development during this Intermézzo is what I call the Medieval Armenian Diaspora. It was a new condition that involved the evolution and growth of a new and permanent social–political–cultural condition of the Armenians at both the regional and international levels.

During this period, another change also occurred. It was the division of the Armenian world and its people into eastern and western segments. It preceded by at least five centuries the official partition of historic Armenia, by the Treaty of Zuhāb, into eastern and western parts between Safavid Iran and Ottoman Turkey in 1639. By the end of the twelfth century, there were distinct eastern and western Armenian worlds. Differences in the folklore, political, and religious cultures became conspicuous. During the twelfth century, in Cilicia, polemics and tensions spread over the entire culture and literature of the Silver Age.

Although information on this Intermezzo, or the period from the last quarter of the tenth century to the end of the twelfth century, is found mostly in non-Armenian sources, the scant extent of these sources is also absolutely essential. This chapter locates scattered and fragmentary data and arranges them in the form of a comprehensive historical structure and arguments. This initiative has another important benefit: Seemingly isolated data, such as dissident-related events in Asia Minor; mysterious and tabooed subjects pertaining to Muslim Armenians; and, most importantly, the Armenian–Islamic Realpolitik during the Turkish period and in Fātimid Egypt find their places in a more or less consistent and broad account of the Armenian experience in the Near East during the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

II. Emigrations and Settlements in al-Shām in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries

During the Byzantine Era, and earlier on in Roman times, Armenians traveled to and resided in Cilicia, al-Shām, Mesopotamia, and Egypt. Already in the sixth century, Aleppo, a short distance east of Antioch, served as a station for Armenian pilgrims to Jerusalem, some of whom settled there and in its cities on their way.¹ During the sixteenth century

(probably earlier too), the *Hogetun* or the "Pilgrims' House" was built in the Christian quarter (*Ḥayy al-Ṣalībīyah* and *Jdaydeh*, where this author was born and went to school) in Aleppo. Otherwise, Armenian immigrations into north Syria began with the settlements initiated by Byzantium after the 1960s and were accelerated to the discontentment of local Christians. The Metropolitan of Amida, Mar Dionysus Ya'qūb Bār Ṣalībī (d. 1171) described the situation:

We would like the pursuers of knowledge to be aware of the following: the Armenians entered Syria and occupied our churches, monasteries and villages during the term of our Patriarch Mar Athanasius III who came to an agreement with the Armenians and their Catholicos Yovhan [Ōjnec'i] in Manzikert in the year 1037 of the Greeks and 726 of our Savor. Since the Persians [Muslims] had destroyed their kingdom, the Armenians started gradually to come down to Syria. When Patriarch Athanasius saw that the Armenians who arrived in Syria were joining the Armenian Chalcedonians or the Julianists, also seeing that they had no priests or bishops, he wrote to Catholicos Yovhan. The latter sent three bishops to receive and shepherd the Armenians arriving to Syria from Armenia. Our Patriarch provided a monastery to Catholicos Yovhan on the Armenian-Syrian border; Armenian and Syrian students were admitted there to study both languages. These students translated the books of the Syrian church fathers into Armenian. But after the death of our Patriarch, they did not respect their commitments and turned against our people.²

The first phase of Armenian emigrations, as shown in the testimony just cited, started during the early decades of the eighth century. Yovhan Ōjnec'i not only establishes this, but he also alludes to the heterodox nature of at least some of the communities that moved to the west and south into the marshes of the River Tigris to avoid persecution. The Armenians were said to have taken over Syrian monasteries and villages and flourished in Syria. As indicated in the archeological proofs, Alboyanian believes that it was during these decades that the Armenians began settling in the valley of the Orontes, Latakīyah, Aramo, Ya'qūbiyah, Shughūr, Antioch, and the surroundings,³ for more than two centuries before the Byzantine settlements in the same locations.

During the ninth century, emigration to the south was negligible. The Paulician and T'ondrakian military alliance with the Muslims allowed many to settle on the Borderlands between the Byzantine and Islamic Empires, as discussed earlier. The eastward and southward movement began after the persecutions of the Paulicians by Emperor

Basil I the Macedonian (867–886).⁴ The imposition of Byzantine orthodoxy over all the Christians of the region was another aspect/pretext of this move, and the deportation and transplantation of large numbers of non-Chalcedonian Christians were a part of this. Many were settled in Italy and parts of Western Europe, and others simply spread into Muslim territories.⁵

According to Charanis, it was during the reign of Leo VI (886–912) that the theme of Mesopotamia (organized in 899–912) became entirely Armenian.⁶ As of the tenth century, Upper Mesopotamia and al-Shām were a part of the new Armenian World.

Ninth- and tenth-century Arab historians drew the northern and western borders of the medieval *Bilād al-Shām*, as it was called, from Melitene to Mar'ash, Adana, P'ayas, Maşşışah (or Mopsuesta, Misis, Mamistra), Ṭarsūs, Antartus, Alexandretta, Antioch, the valley of the Orontes, Aleppo, Menbij, Qawras, Edessa, Samosata, and the middle Euphrates. This very large area included the 'Abbāsīd Frontiers and had almost sixty-five settlements or cities, in both the '*awāṣim* and the *thughūr*.⁷ Michael the Syrian says that by the middle of the century, the Greeks could occupy Antioch, because the Arabs were "in fear."⁸ Antioch fell, because it showed no resistance, and Syria and Palestine were almost abandoned. Edessa was under siege in 942, Samosata was lost in 958/959, and the defeated Ḥamdānids withdrew to their stronghold, Aleppo. Melitene was annexed in 934; Theodosiopolis (or Karin), in 949; Muš and the province of Taron, in 969; and so on. As the Arab population left these locations, the Greeks brought in Armenians.⁹ When the Turks appeared after the first quarter of the tenth century, the population of the cities—rather fortress cities—was at least partly and often mostly Armenian. Other factors greatly complicated circumstances, as we shall see next.

These radical changes had a bright side as well. The seemingly cataclysmic developments caused the urbanization of Armenians, the enrichment of their culture, and the development of new classes, such as merchants, people of learning, craftsmen, entertainers, and artists. In line with the Byzantine policy of recovering lands lost to the Arabs and introducing the Christian element, Emperor Nikephoros II Phokas and his general John Tzimiskes settled Armenian military men and their families in the evacuated locations, with a parallel plan of converting them into the Chalcedonian faith on lands not their own.¹⁰

According to Ibn al-'Adīm, in 963/352H, Nikephoros Phokas occupied 'Ayn Zarbah, Delūk, Adana, and the other *thughūrs* or

gates—passageways of al-Shām in Cilicia. He says that two years later, in 965/354H, Maşşīṣah, Mar'ash, and Țarşūş fell. In 967/357H, Sayf al-Dawlah al-Ḥamdānī of Aleppo died, and before 969/359, Nikephoros II was near Lake Van and the Tigris. In al-Shām, he adds, the Greeks were in Antioch, Kāfartāb, Shayzar, Ḥamāh, Jablah, and Ma'arrat al-Nu'mān.¹¹ To carry out these operations and maintain control, the Greeks established Byzantine–Armenian military colonies in Menbij, Delūk, Edessa, and the other fortresses of the Euphrates.¹² As we read Arab histories of al-Shām in these times, it seems that it was natural to find Chalcedonian Armenians, Paulician–T'ondrakians, and Muslim Armenians in the entire region. For example, Yaḥyā al-Anṭākī has a story about an Armenian woman who in 980/370H was kept captive in the fortress of Ra'bān (then in Muslim hands). One night, benefiting from the absence of guards, she managed to take on the fortress with some help from her family in the village and delivered it to the Byzantines.¹³ In the same year, he mentions the appointment of a certain Muslim Armenian called Karmruk (*reddish* in Armenian) as governor of Tripoli.¹⁴ There are many such stories in Arab chronicles.

In sum, by the end of the tenth century, large communities of Armenians lived in the area and were active in various capacities and alliances. Confirming what has been just mentioned, K. Salibi says that between 963 and 965, Nikephoros II “established Armenian colonies in Cilicia and the northwest corner of Syria” on previously Ḥamdānid-held lands.¹⁵ The number of emigrants in the province of Antioch alone grew so much that a bishopric was established there by Catholicos Xač'ik I Aršaruni (971–992). This is how K. Salibi sees the period:

Among the immigrants there were bands of free-lance warriors who entered the service of Byzantine emperors or Muslim rulers as mercenaries. Badr al-Jamālī, [for example] the *amīr al-juyūsh* of Egypt under the caliph al-Mustansir, was originally the leader of one such Armenian warrior band. His personal conversion to Islam, which secured his career in the Fāṭimid service, did not interfere with his relationship to his Christian Armenian followers, who were organized as a special corps within the Fāṭimid army under his direct command . . . Some of these Armenian troops may also have become Muslims, like their commander, as they entered Fāṭimid service.¹⁶

The important point to be made here is that the link between the north and south, east and west or between the different parts of the Armenian habitat can only be made by looking at both the habitat and the period as a singularity in Near Eastern and Armenian history.

In other words, the paradigm of *habitat*—where one lives and subsists—is of central significance at least in this region.

One of the many ironies of Near Eastern history—a topic worthy of a separate study on the Armenian condition in the medieval Near East—is that during the tenth century, the masterminds, instruments, and victims of Byzantine politics were often Armenian. In most operations against the Armenians and campaigns on the Muslim side during the tenth century, the Armenians constituted the majority not only in their armies but also on the other side of the borders. The revolt of Bardas Skleros in 976 was often considered an “Armenian revolt.”¹⁷ Skleros’ daughter Maria was the first wife of John Tzimiskes, before he became emperor.¹⁸ Basil I, the founder of the Macedonian dynasty, was Armenian. Queen Theodora and the grandmother of Basil II (976–1025) were Armenian ladies. Romanos I Lekapenos (919–944) was an Armenian from the theme of Armeniakon, and as mentioned, Yovhannēs or John I Tzimiskes was a native of Hierapolis near Ḥanzīt in Fourth Armenia.¹⁹ The Phokas family was part Armenian.²⁰ All military men, John Kurkuas from Gangra, Alexios Meseles or Muṣeḥ,²¹ Melias, or Mleh (d. 934), were Armenians.²²

Basil II continued the policies of his predecessors with greater zeal and put an effective end to the Bagratunis much earlier than the official handing in, so to speak, of the capital Ani to the emperor in 1045. According to Ibn al-ʿAdīm, in 996/386H, the emperor was in north Syria and took Aleppo back from the Maghāribah troops of the Fāṭimids,²³ and in 999/389H, he replaced the Arab population of the Syrian Shayzar and the valley of the Orontes by Armenians.²⁴ Throughout, he deployed Armenian troops in the north Syrian operations.²⁵ Michael the Syrian says,

In the year 1300 [990] . . . began the emigration of the Armenians from Greater Armenia and first of all from Cappadocia. It was Basil [II], who confiscated from the Armenians the lands of King Senekʿerim [Arçruni, in 1021] and gave them instead Sivās (or Sebastia). Since then the Armenians expanded throughout Cappadocia, Cilicia and Syria.²⁶

By a treaty with Bagratuni King Yovhannēs Smbat in 1022, Byzantium took his land as its “inheritance.”²⁷ Until the fall of all the Armenian dynastic principalities and the other vassal lands, more Armenians settled in the Taurus, the Cilician plain, the Amanus, the Syrian Gates, and northern Syria.²⁸ Byzantine policies for the eastern borders led

to a major breakdown of Byzantine authority in Asia Minor. Almost the entire eastern Asia Minor, including Greater Armenia, was left unguarded and opened them for the expansion of the Turkic tribes. In the end, Byzantium could not convert the people under its control into its "orthodoxy" and many either rebelled or simply migrated. Eventually, in the vacuum that was created, the Turks won.²⁹

III. Greeks, Christians, Armenians, Ismā'īlis, Ḥamdānids, Fāṭimids, Kalbīs, and Kilābīs in al-Shām during the Ninth and Tenth Centuries

The breakdown of order in al-Shām began as the 'Abbāsids gradually lost control over their northern and western territories around the middle of the ninth century. There were still some pro-Umayyad elements in these regions, says Salibi, and "Shī'ite heterodoxy in its Imāmī, Nuṣayrī, Ismā'īlī or Qarmāṭī forms, appears to have superseded the Sufyānī movement as the means to express popular challenge of the established order in Syria."³⁰ The Qarmāṭians (Qarmāṭīs or al-Qarāmiṭa) were a branch of Shī'ism. They believed in the "hidden imāms" after the seventh imām, the latter being Ismā'īl, the son of Ja'far al-Šādiq, who was said to be a descendant of the Prophet 'Alī (d. 765).³¹ Twelver Shī'ism or Imāmism—established during the same period in Jabal Baḥrā and Jabal 'Āmil—accepted the line not from Ismā'īl but his brother Mūsā al-Kāẓim. The last in line from 'Alī—as believed—disappeared as a child and was considered the "expected imām," or *al-Imām al-Muntazar* or *al-Mahdī*, the "messiah."³² Imāmism developed in two branches: the Ja'fari branch that followed the interpretations of Ja'far Ibn al-Šādiq and established the Ja'fari School of Muslim jurisprudence, and Nuṣayrism, a more rustic wing.³³

The Ismā'īlis had a "highly organized urban leadership," says Salibi, but the Qarāmiṭa were possibly "an unsophisticated rural and tribal offshoot of the movement, with a largely Bedouin and tribal *'ashā'ir* following." They were trying to seize power in Syria with the help of the local tribes.³⁴ Amid constant conflicts and territorial claims by the Bedouins and the *'ashā'ir* (tribes, clans), the stage was ready for new alliances. The Ṭayy Arabs in south Syria allied with the Qarmāṭians, who were powerful in East Arabia and controlled the route to al-Ḥijāz.³⁵ During the late summer of 902/290H, Abū'l-Qāsim, their leader in Syria, "gathered around him an immense multitude of tribesmen, and advanced against Damascus."³⁶ Since both the Bedouins and the *'ashā'ir* joined the Qarāmiṭa, tribalism triumphed in Syria from the

beginning to the last quarter of the tenth century. Among the people, there was a near loss of historic memory of the Hellenistic, Roman, and Umayyad urban cultures.³⁷ At almost the same time, the Ismā'īlīs of the Yemen reached Tunisia, where the "hidden imam" of the day, 'Ubaydallāh arrived from Salāmiyah in central Syria. "In 909/297H he made his presence manifest, assumed the millennial title of al-Mahdī, and proclaimed the establishment of the Fāṭimid Caliphate."³⁸ The claims for descent from Muḥammad's daughter Fāṭimah were to establish legitimacy in the Islamic community, but Sunnī historians referred to the Fāṭimids as "Ubaydids," after their first caliph, Caliph 'Ubaydallāh.

In 947/336H, the Ḥamdānids in Aleppo gained power over the Ikshīdids of Egypt, and Sayf al-Dawlah established his primarily Arab principality (since the time of the Umayyads), while the Ikshīdids controlled Palestine and Damascus.³⁹ According to al-Mas'ūdī, Sayf al-Dawlah controlled a large area from Ḥimṣ south of Aleppo to Qinnasrīn, Diyār Muḍar, Diyār Bakr, and the *thughūr* of al-Shām and al-Jazīrah.⁴⁰ The "consciously Arab" Ḥamdānid principality, as Salibi describes it, represented a "political resurgence of Arabism within the framework of the decadent 'Abbāsīd Caliphate," opposing both the Qarāmiṭa and the Fāṭimids and their claims of leading the Muslims.⁴¹ In 'Abbāsīd Baghdad, the Persian Twelver Shī'ī (or the *lthnā 'Ashariyah* who believe in the Expected and not the Apparent Imām) Buwayhids were in power,⁴² whereas in Aleppo, Sayf al-Dawlah presented himself as the image of the Arab Muslim leader. The Ḥamdānids also proclaimed themselves as warriors against the enemies of the Muslims and the Byzantines, in particular. In his poems, the companion supporter of Sayf al-Dawlah and great poet al-Mutanabbī praised the "Arabs rather than the Turkish *mamlūks* as the spearheads of Islam."⁴³

Around 960, the Ḥamdānids fell when Nikephoros II Phokas and his nephew John Tzimiskes penetrated the Ḥamdānid strongholds from Cilicia to the Tigris. In 962, the Greeks entered their capital Aleppo and plundered the city.⁴⁴ The urban youth coalitions or the *aḥdāth* (also called *awbāsh*, rogue, the "mob") of Aleppo are mentioned for the first time in the narratives of this siege. When the city was under pressure due to Sayf al-Dawlah in Qinnasrīn, according to the historian Ibn al-'Adīm, these *aḥdāth* were plundering the markets. The inhabitants who were defending the city walls deserted their positions to protect their homes and properties. The Byzantine soldiers put up ladders on the walls, entered Aleppo, and looted the city for eight days.⁴⁵

Until his death on January 25, 967, Sayf al-Dawlah worked at keeping the Greeks away.⁴⁶ Syria fell to the Byzantines, who, however, could not keep it. The Fāṭimids, in turn, were not welcome by the Sunnis, the Christians, the Imāmīs, and the Qarmāṭians. Similar to the Umayyads and 'Abbāsids before them, they found Syria a "difficult land to control."⁴⁷ "The conflict of imperial interests between Byzantium, Fāṭimid Cairo and 'Abbāsīd Baghdad provided the opportunity for various forces within Syria to assert themselves with the backing of one or another of the imperial contentions."⁴⁸

The main tribal confederations were the Kalb in central Syria, the Kilāb in northern Syria, which was connected to the Kilāb of al-Jazīrah (between the Euphrates and its main tributary, River Khābūr), and the Ṭayy in south Syria, which was connected to the Ṭayy of Jabalayn in Arabia. In addition, there were many tribes or '*ashā'ir* between the coastal and the interior cities; they were called the *aṭrāf* or peripheral clans, a few of whom were Christian.⁴⁹ The Christians and Jews lived mainly in the cities, and were distributed at all the levels of society, from the urban aḥdāth to the notables, thus making their influence felt everywhere. These minorities played a significant role in Aleppo, in particular.⁵⁰ As of the beginning of the tenth century, when trade was activated between Byzantium and Egypt, the coastal cities flourished.⁵¹

The consecutive occupations of the cities opened the stage for the aḥdāth. These youth coalitions of the cities were militant and mostly anarchistic. By the latter part of the tenth century, they "emerged as a formidable force." Internally divided into rival groups, they, nevertheless, "joined ranks in the face of enemies," often acting independently of the city notables.⁵² Between 975 and 977, Eftekin (or Aftekin), the Turkish governor of Damascus, briefly brought them under control. When he left, a certain Qassām al-Ṭarrāb led these coalitions and for a while, he even controlled the token Fāṭimid army in Damascus.⁵³ In 999, the idiosyncratic caliph al-Ḥākim (996/386H–1021/412H) sent his Berber troops to Damascus. The notables supported the aḥdāth by pretending to submit to the Fāṭimids, but eventually, the city was subjugated.⁵⁴ When the Fāṭimids put a siege on Aleppo, Sa'īd al-Dawlah and his guardian Lū'lū' invited Emperor Basil II to assist them against the Fāṭimids. He drove them away, and the caliph was forced to accept a peace treaty in 1001/391H. In addition to Antioch, Shayzar and other outposts were already in Byzantine hands.⁵⁵

After the death of Sa'īd al-Dawlah by poisoning, there was a period of unease between him and the Ḥamdānids. In March 1014/ Ramaḍān 404H, Maṣṣūr Ibn Lū'lū' received a decree from al-Ḥākim that confirmed his hold over Aleppo. He also had the support of large numbers of the paramilitary urban youth known as the *ahl* or the *aḥdāth* of Aleppo, of both Jewish and Christian background. He became the first ruler who acknowledged the Fāṭimid Caliphate instead of the 'Abbāsīd. However, on disputes and broken agreements with the Kilābīs, and a confrontation with them in August 1014/Ṣafar 405H, he lost the battle.⁵⁶ Ibn al-'Adīm as well as other historians use the word *ahl* (native people) to refer to these *aḥdāth*, and not to the ordinary "inhabitants,"⁵⁷ as some wrongly translate.

In 1015, Maṣṣūr fled, and the Ḥamdānids finally lost Aleppo.⁵⁸ The Kalb welcomed the Fāṭimids and on February 3, 1017/Ramaḍān 2, 407H, the first Fāṭimid ruler entered Aleppo.⁵⁹ He was the Muslim Armenian 'Azīz al-Dawlah. I will describe his personality and six-year career in detail a little later in this chapter. Aleppo and the province remained under Fāṭimid control till 1060/452H. In the meantime, the Byzantines were still active in north Syria and deployed mainly Armenian troops. Earlier, there were many Armenians in the armies of Romanos III Argyros (1028–1034). In Arab histories, there are accounts about their activities around the fortress of A'zāz and also about some looting during their withdrawal.⁶⁰ In the 1030s, Aleppo was declared a vassal of Byzantium, and Romanos informed Cairo of the change of status,⁶¹ but he soon lost control. Later on, in 1062/454H, Byzantium began building a number of castles near Aleppo, as a part of its new southeastern frontier fortifications.⁶² Earlier on, in 1056/448H, the Fāṭimids had supported the rebellion of al-Basāsirī and assisted him against the 'Abbāsīds.⁶³ S. Zakkār observes that Syria was under non-Arab rule for almost 840 years, from 1079/471H, when the Mirdāsīds lost it to the Seljuks, to the end of World War I in 1918.⁶⁴

A parenthesis should be opened here about Aleppo and north Syria, in general, at that time. The first distinctive aspect of north Syria during the tenth and eleventh centuries was the tribal nature of the society, and the next was the Christian and Shī'ī-Imāmī religious cultures of the region. The population of north Syria was mostly Christian and was Islamized during relatively later periods. Important demographic changes happened because of the Byzantine policy of transplanting Armenians in the locations evacuated by the Arabs. The population

of the city of Aleppo itself had a majority of Christians, who lived in the northern districts of Aleppo, and "it would appear that most of them were of Armenian origin," says S. al-Jundī.⁶⁵ The Jews had their own quarter, and one of the gates was called *Bāb al-Yahūd* (or Gate of the Jews) after them. Zakkār says, "There was a large Armenian community in Aleppo and its surroundings," but he does not provide any specific information about their circumstances.⁶⁶ Based on Ibn Baṭlān's accounts, he says that there were two chapels and one mosque in the citadel, and six churches and one mosque in the city. Mosques were constructed only after 1080, when the entire country fell to the Seljuks and Christian communities shrank. One of the churches was a very large cathedral dedicated to St. Helene. In 1124, and after a Crusader attack on the city and the desecration of the Muslim cemetery, Muḥammad Ibn Yaḥyā al-Khashshāb, the *qāḍī* (head judge) of Aleppo, ordered the confiscation of the churches and converted them into mosques.⁶⁷

Christians also lived around Ma'arat al-Nu'mān and "some of their villages were distinguished by the prefix '*kafar*' [or *gawar*, district/village in Armenian] such as Kafar-Nubbu. . . it would appear that most of them were of Armenian origin."⁶⁸ The Christians were on good terms with the Mirdāsids. Theodoros/Tādarus Ibn al-Ḥasan, vizier of Ṣāliḥ Ibn Mirdās, was a Christian. "This Christian had a great influence over Ṣāliḥ," says Ibn al-'Adīm,⁶⁹ who was the highest authority in the military and the administration. After his death, Ṣāliḥ's son Naṣr, in turn, appointed another Christian called Abū'l-Faraj al-Mu'ammil Ibn Yūsuf al-Shammās as his vizier. Most Christians were educated and skilled people⁷⁰ and were also involved in wine-making and catering professions (as Islam prohibited drinking). The taverns were called *mākhūr*, *ḥānah*, *khān*, and *funduq*. In 1027, there were confessional troubles in Ma'arrat al-Nu'mān, because brothels were owned by Christians. Theodoros demanded harsh punishment against those who assaulted the Christians. Abū'l-'Alā' al-Ma'arrī traveled to Aleppo to plead for the life of the prisoners. However, the next year after Ṣāliḥ's death, the Christians of Kafar Nubbu were assaulted and left the area. In his comments about these events, Abū'l-'Alā' reveals explicit and uncharacteristic (for him) anti-Christian attitudes.⁷¹

It seems that during the tenth and eleventh centuries, most of the Muslims of Aleppo were Twelver Shī'is or Imāmīs. Sayf al-Dawlah himself was an Imāmī, as Ibn Baṭlān confirms.⁷² This was "the possible

explanation of their [Ḥamdānid] tolerant attitude towards the Christians of the city," adds Zakkār.⁷³ There was a minority Sunnī community and on occasion, clashes happened with the other Muslims.⁷⁴ The Kilābīs and the Mirdāsids were Imāmī Shī'īs. Based on the *Dīwān* of Ibn Abī Ḥasīna, Zakkār says that at the time, most of the Muslims of Aleppo were Imāmīs. Since the nomads "held their religious beliefs somewhat loosely," he adds,⁷⁵ their "attachment" to and knowledge of religious doctrines is never clear. At any rate, many of them had strictly Shī'ī names such as 'Alī, 'Ulwān, Ḥasan, and Ja'far. Ṣāliḥ Ibn Mirdās was known as Abū 'Alī, and his son Thimāl was known as Abū 'Ulwān.⁷⁶ Furthermore, the Kilābīs preferred "purely Arabic and not Islamic" names. No name carried the prefix 'Abd, a word that is "usually attached to one of the 100 Arabic names [attributes] of Allah. Instead, we find Thimāl, Waththāb, Sābiq, Shabīb, Māni, Zammā', Thābit, etc."⁷⁷

Zakkār makes another interesting comment about the status of women in the tribal societies of north Syria. He says that they were held very highly and were sometimes entrusted with roles in political affairs and missions. He gives the example of the mother of Kilābī Ṣāliḥ Ibn Mirdās, wife of Thimāl Ibn Mirdās. She was known as al-Sayyidah (or the lady).⁷⁸ In general, he adds, both the Kalb and Kilāb tribes maintained their tribal customs, even after they had been integrated into urban society. He speaks of the spring celebrations when the tribal chiefs offered *maḍīrah*—a dish with boiled lamb meat, yogurt, and bread—to the public.⁷⁹

During the first decade of the eleventh century, the cult of al-Ḥākim spread in Syria. Al-Darazī, one of the followers of al-Dizbarī the founder, maintained that al-Ḥākim was the "living manifestation of God as the immanent reality of cosmic reason, or the demiurge, and that he was the incarnation of God."⁸⁰ Among the idiosyncrasies of this caliph were his violent persecutions of Christians (except during some rare moments of sanity). He initiated harsh measures against all the Christians of Egypt and in the territories under his control. They were the majority of the population in Latakiah and Jerusalem; north Syria also had very large Christian communities.⁸¹ In 1007, there were massacres in Latakiah. Abū'l-'Alā' al-Ma'arrī wrote,

There is turmoil in Latakiah,
Between Christ and Muḥammad.

One strikes at a plank of plane wood;
The other shrieks from a minaret.
Each upholds his own religion;
I wonder which one is right.⁸²

Despite these bizarre practices and perhaps because of them, al-Ḥākim managed to have a grip over Syria. However, during the term of his son and successor, al-Ẓāhir, Fāṭimid control weakened, and the Mirdāsids established their Kilāb principality in Aleppo. It was during these troubled times in al Shām at the end of the tenth century that the Armenians were spreading in the region. They acquired lands and created a new homeland for themselves west of the Euphrates, between the Taurus, Melitene, Sivās, Caesarea, Ṭarṣūs, north Syria, and Edessa, the valleys of the Cilician rivers, and the Syrian Orontes.⁸³ Warlords settled in the vital fortresses of al-Shām, and Armenian communities gathered around them seeking protection.⁸⁴ Armenians were the majority of the population in these parts.⁸⁵

IV. The Ghuzz/Turkmen and Seljuks in Asia Minor, Armenia, and al-Shām

A. Early Turkish Penetration and the Armenians

By the first decades of the eleventh century, led by a chieftain called Seljuk/Saljuk, the Turkic and Muslim Oghuz or Ghuzz tribes started moving toward Transoxania and northwestern Persia in the west. Between 1025 and 1037, they were in Khurasān, and defeated the Ghaznawids (Persianized Turkish *mamlūks*).⁸⁶ Soon, they were in Azerbaijan on plundering expeditions and put pressure on Vaspurakan (between the lakes Van and Urmia). In 1040, two brothers, Tughril (Toghril or Toghrul) Bey Muḥammad and Chagrī Bey Dāwūd, of the Seljuk family destroyed the Ghaznawid Kingdom of Iran and⁸⁷ in the same year, they obtained recognition for their kingdom from the 'Abbāsīd court.

As Sunnī Muslims, the Seljuks respected the 'Abbāsīd caliph and despised the Shī'ī Buwayhids. In turn, Caliph al-Qā'im (1031–1075) maintained good relations with Tughril in Isfahan⁸⁸; he even granted him the title of *sulṭān*. By 1055, Tughril reached the borders of the Byzantine Empire. After his death in 1063, his nephew Alp Arslān (1063–1072) succeeded him as "Sulṭān of Islam in Isfahān."⁸⁹ Eventually, the Seljuks established four kingdoms: Isfahān was the center of

the first one in Iran; the second was in Khwarizm; the Rüm-Seljuk or the Sultanate of Iconium was established by Sulaymān Ibn Qutulmish; and Tutush was the founder of the fourth Seljuk Kingdom in Syria. Around 1220, the Mongols began spreading in the region, but the Seljuk enclaves lasted to the end of the fourteenth century.

Looked on as the “slaves” of the Seljuks, the nomadic Turkmen entered Armenia from Azerbaijan. The move was a part of the Seljuk strategy. They first dispatched the Ghuzz tribes to pillage and weaken the population and their defenses, then they sent their own troops to occupy and control. In 1040–1042, about 15,000 Turkmens from the region of Lake Urmia attacked Vaspurakan and defeated the Byzantine troops near the city of Arčēš on the northeastern shore of Lake Van. Another group raided Bjni, northeast of present Erevan.⁹⁰ The towns that had flourished earlier fell consecutively: Ani in 1045, Mananafi in 1048, Arcn in the northwest in 1048/1049, Baiburt in 1054, Melitene in the southwest and Colonea in 1057, and Sivās in 1059. The Seljuks finally captured Ani in 1064, Kars in 1065, and Caesarea in 1067. Many smaller Armenian principalities, however, managed to continue in Gugark', Siwnik', Arc'ax, parts of Vaspurakan, Mekk', and Sasun. Some parts of Armenia, says Bedrosian, never fell to the Seljuks.⁹¹ The Arab tribes were compelled to move elsewhere in search of new pastures for their herds. Salibi says,

The emergence of the Seljuk Empire in Persia and Iraq had two immediate effects on the internal developments in the Muslim world. First, it brought about a sudden resurgence of Sunnite power in the lands east of the Euphrates, which right away threw the Fāṭimid Caliphate in Cairo on the defensive. Second, it opened the way for Turkish tribal migrations into the central lands of Islam on a large scale.⁹²

As mentioned, at the start of the Ghuzz and Seljuk invasions, Armenians constituted the great majority of the population on the eastern borders of the Byzantine Empire, in Edessa, Melitene, Capadocia, the Taurus, Ṭarṣūs, north Syria, and the Tigris.⁹³ At the time, Greater Armenia—mostly under Byzantium—was divided into four administrative units: Mesopotamia (*Mijagetk'* in Armenian) was the southeastern part of Armenia starting from the Euphrates through Diyār Bakr. It was given to Grigor Pahlawuni Magistros in exchange for his estates in Siwnik' on the mainland in the east; Taron was east of Mesopotamia, and Manazkert was a part of it. It was distributed

among the remnants of the Armenian *naxarars* (or the feudal aristocracy), the Mamikoneans, and the Bagratunis; Vaspurakan was east of Lake Van and was surrounded by Muslims on three sides: Kurdistan in the south, Azerbaijan in the east, and Dwin/Dābil in the north. Until the middle of the eleventh century, the Armenian fortresses in Vaspurakan were still intact. At this time, Virik' or Geogia/Iberia was mainly the province of Tayk'.⁹⁴

Seljuk's expansion into Armenia coincided with the term of Emperor Constantine IX Monomachos (1042–1055). Michael the Syrian takes the year 1038 as the beginning of Seljuk penetration.⁹⁵ Similarly, Aristakēs says that early Turkish penetrations were from Vaspurakan, between Lake Urmia and Van, and that by 1063, the Turks were in Kars and around Manazkert in Apahunik', threatening Melitene, Sivās, and other cities which had large Armenian communities.⁹⁶ Michael the Syrian speaks of early attacks on Melitene around 1040, a counterattack by the people of Sasun on the Seljuk camp near Sasun, and a retaliatory massacre of the Turks by the Armenians.⁹⁷ In 1056/1057, Melitene was pillaged, and the Turks reached Sivās. The Georgian Armenian Dānishmandids, who had converted to Islam, took many parts of Cappadocia. In 1071/463H, the defeat of Romanos IV Diogenes (1068–1071) during the battle of Manazkert caused a radical change in the region.

A few years after this battle, great numbers of nomadic Turks and their herds spread in eastern Asia Minor. Many cities were invaded and isolated; farming suffered greatly; and, eventually, urban life declined, agricultural society eroded, produce disappeared, and famine spread.⁹⁸ However, gradually, the situation was brought under control by both the Turks and Byzantines. Caesarea, Neocaesarea, Ancyra/Ankara, Aksaray, and Konya were rebuilt, and other locations were evacuated. In order to revive farming and crafts, the Turks repopulated some locations with Greeks and Armenians.⁹⁹

B. Al-Shām in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries

In his introduction to the concise translation of *The Damascus Chronicle of the Crusaders* of Ibn al-Qalānisī, H. Gibb describes the "complexity" of the eleventh and twelfth centuries as something "verging upon anarchy."¹⁰⁰ He suggests six distinct influences, which were active in *Bilād al-Shām* at the time: the Fātimids, the local Arab tribes and princes, the Seljuk and Turkmen *amīrs* or princes, the Turkish military officers, the independent non-Seljukid Turkmen tribes, and

the local urban youth or the *aḥdāth*. Militant sectarian groups, such as the *Bāṭinī* Nizārī Ismāʿīlīs, the Nuṣayrīs, the Druzes, and the Maronites, are classified under the “general body of the population.” He elaborates,

Large communities of Kurds and especially of Armenians settled mainly in the north. In the foothills of the Taurus and on the banks of the Euphrates both Kurds and Armenians had succeeded in founding several baronies and even more extensive principalities, which were, however, disappearing before the onslaught of the Turkmens. In several, if not most, of the northern cities, Armenians formed the majority of the population, and it does not appear that the treatment which they received was in any way worse than that melted out to the other subjects.¹⁰¹

In Syria and Egypt, Armenians also served in the Islamic armies as *ʿaskars* (troops) and as *ghulāms* in the mounted guards.¹⁰² In a survey of the various factions and sects of the Islamic society of al-Shām during the eleventh century, S. ʿĀshūr also mentions the great numbers of Armenians among the *ghulāms*, in general.¹⁰³ The major sects, according to him, were the Nuṣayrīs, ʿAlawīs, Shīʿīs, the Tannūkhīs, the Banū Maʿan, the Shīʿīs of north Lebanon (*al-mutāwilah*), the Shihābī Druzes, and the Bāṭinīs or Ismāʿīlīs. In general, he says, “the Armenians were known for their constructive contribution to the Islamic community.” The Banū Munqidh of Shayzar, in particular, were closely associated with the Armenians in their hunting expeditions, sports, wars, and other activities.¹⁰⁴ Sunnī persecution sometimes drove some of these factions, such as the Maronites, to cooperate with the Crusaders.¹⁰⁵

Most schismatic groups were rebellious and did not live in the cities. They spread in the mountain ranges in the northwest and west, in Lebanon, and some in central Syria. They fortified themselves, formed powerful organizations, and defied the Muslim princes.¹⁰⁶ Similar to the Armenian dissidents of the same period and earlier, they were militarized, and many showed resistance to both the Crusaders and the Sunnī Seljuks. Little is known about the Nuṣayrīs, a sub-Shīʿite syncretistic sect in eastern Asia Minor and Syria, who fought the Crusaders and were often slaughtered by them. The Druzes also sided with the Muslims, but the Maronites always fought in the ranks of the Crusaders. The Ismāʿīlīs followed their Nizārī leader Ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ṣabbāḥ (d.1124) and were popularly known as the *Ḥashshāshūn* or the Assassins (the transliterated form in Western sources). In Arabic,

hashshāshūn means users of *hashish* or cannabis. According to legend, these were the Nizārī Ismāʿīlīs of Alamūt in Iran, who were dispatched into various parts of the region for terrorist assignments (hence, the double reference of the word assassin).¹⁰⁷ Most of the people spoke Arabic, including the Christian inhabitants in the north, who were mostly Nestorians and Jacobites.

Unstable circumstances and tension between various factions in Syria were aggravated by the perpetual raids of the Bedouin tribes, Byzantine invasions, tyrannical rulers, brutal taxation, earthquakes (1029/420H; 1033/425H; 1063/455H; and 1067/460H), and famine (the worst was in 1073–1074 in Syria as well as in Egypt). As a consequence, there was a kind of “military renaissance,” says Muṣṭafā, particularly in the north and at the center,¹⁰⁸ where the Armenians had settled for some time.

Having appeared two centuries earlier, during the eleventh century, the *aḥdāth* or the paramilitary urban youth coalitions (also referred to as confraternities in modern sources) were particularly strong in the cities. Unlike the Bedouins of the desert, they were organized urban militia that at times of power vacuum replaced the *shurṭah* (police) and defended their city against external invaders alongside the regular forces. As mentioned earlier, they were often referred to as *ahl al-madīnah* (people, inhabitants of the city) or simply *al-ahl* or *al-aḥdāth*. These coalitions were active in Damascus at the end of the tenth century, at the time of Ikhshīdīd Ibn Ṭūlūn. Similar to Iraq and Egypt, most cities of al-Shām and al-Jazīrah had their own *aḥdāth* or *youth*, as they called them. The coalitions consisted of unskilled young men from modest classes under the command of a chief or a *raʾīs*, also called *raʾīs al-balad* (chief of the city/country).¹⁰⁹ In the bigger cities, their numbers rose to a few thousands, whereas the smaller cities had a few hundreds. Their activity was mostly confined to city limits and rarely to the surrounding *basātīn* or the agricultural suburbs. Since the year 1063, the *aḥdāth* were the major force fighting the Fāṭimids.¹¹⁰

C. The Ghuzz in Syria

In Syria, the alliances were never constant. When the Mirdāsīd ruler Muʿizz al-Dawlah Thimāl handed Aleppo over to the Fāṭimids, in exchange for Jibayl, Beirut, and Akkā, the Kilāb Arabs moved to Aleppo, but in 1062/454H, the Fāṭimid governor Asad al-Dawlah ʿAṭīya (Thimāl’s brother) turned to the *aḥdāth* for assistance.¹¹¹ When threatened by his nephew Maḥmūd Ibn Naṣr, he sought Turkmen

assistance in 1064/456H. A Turkmen chief of the Nāwikīs, called Hārūn Ibn Khān, responded to his appeal and arrived in Aleppo to assist him with a force of about a thousand men. This marked the first Ghuzz/Turkmen penetration into Syria. Muṣṭafā describes the first Turkmen attack on Aleppo:

When the Turkmens entered Aleppo, 'Aṭiya and the people of the city [aḥdāth] were frightened, and Aṭiya incited the aḥdāth of Aleppo against them. The latter raided [their camp] by night in Ṣafar (January-February 1065), killing a number of them and plundering their horses, armaments, and whatever else they could seize of their effects. [As] Ibn Khān rode away in flight . . . he cried out [as he passed] under the citadel, 'remember, 'Aṭiya, you have betrayed me. By God, I shall bring you down from up there' . . .¹¹²

Ibn Khān returned with Maḥmūd Ibn Naṣr Ibn Mirdās, put a siege on the city, entered after 102 days, and enthroned 'Izz al-Dawlah as governor.¹¹³ Salibi places these initial Turkmen penetrations into Syria in the context of Seljuk strategies. As usual, he says, the Seljuks pushed forward the Turkmen of the peripheries, or the *uj/auj* in Turkish, as "vanguards for further expansion."¹¹⁴ Their ultimate objective was to conquer Fāṭimid Cairo. The first attempt to move through al-Shām to Egypt was made in 1051/443 when Tughril asked for the permission of the Byzantines to march through their territories.¹¹⁵ The wider gate to enter al-Shām was through Armenian-controlled lands in the Byzantine theme of Mesopotamia, and they started their move around 1054–1055/446–447H.¹¹⁶ The farther the Turkmens moved into central Asia Minor and Syria, the more they lost touch with their Seljuk leadership in Persia and Iraq. For a while, their warlords managed to pursue their own interests.¹¹⁷ The Dānishmandids and the Nāwikīs, both of Georgian–Armenian descent, are prominent examples of groups who made the most of the circumstances and managed to rise to power, the former in much higher degrees than the latter. Both cases will be discussed in greater detail next.

Already in 1064, contacts were made between the Turkmen chieftain Ibn Khān and the future Fāṭimid vizier the Armenian Badr al-Jamālī (1074–1094), at the time the military governor of al-Shām. The Fāṭimids had lost control over north and central Syria, and in Damascus, Badr was faced with a popular revolt. The leader of the uprising, Abū Ṭāhir Ḥaydara Ibn Abū al-Ḥusayn, was a notable man of the city of 'Alid descent. Badr was forced to leave but was reinstalled as

governor in 1066/458H. In 1068/460H, Abū Ṭāhir led another revolt; the governor's palace outside the city was burned down, but this time, Badr crushed the insurrection.¹¹⁸

In 1069/461H, the situation in Damascus and Egypt deteriorated once more, because Arab, Turkish, and Berber troops were trying to put an end to the Fāṭimid Caliphate. In Tyre/Šūr, Ibn Abū 'Aqil and in Tripoli, Amīn al-Dawlah Abū Ṭālib al-Ḥasan Ibn 'Ammār (or Ḥammār, probably a Twelver Shī'i) were almost independent of the Fāṭimids and enjoyed the support of the merchants of their cities. In 1070, Maḥmūd Ibn Mirdās of Aleppo ordered the Friday *khuṭbah* (oration) to be recited in the name of 'Abbāsīd caliph al-Qā'im and the Seljuk Sultan Alp Arslān.¹¹⁹ On January 19, 1071/463, after his conquest in Edessa, Alp Arslān entered Syria, crossing the Euphrates as "king."¹²⁰ In al-Shām, where great numbers of Armenians, Turkmens, and Kurds had settled, Arab tribal power declined and Fāṭimid control diminished.

As will be discussed next, almost a hundred years of Armenian involvement in Fāṭimid and Seljuk politics was signaled by the appointment of Badr al-Jamālī, "an officer of outstanding and ruthless competence—to be his [Caliph Abū Tamīm Mu'add al-Mustaṣṣir, 1035–1094] *amīr al-juyūsh*, or commander in chief, [literally 'commander of armies'] in 1070/462H," says Salibi. The appearance of a Muslim Armenian on the stage also marked a very advanced phase in the involvement of Muslim and heterodox Armenians. Badr and his compatriots were sent to suppress the revolt of Ibn Abū 'Aqil of Tyre, in other words, to defend the Fāṭimid cause in al-Shām.¹²¹ When Badr laid siege on Tyre in 1069–1070/462H, 'Ayn al-Dawlah sought help from Turkmen Nāwikī Qurlū [or Qaralu, or Qoroghlu]. Badr expected no assistance from already bankrupt caliph al-Mustaṣṣir, who was totally powerless in the face of civil conflict, wars, plagues, and famine. Al-Maqrīzī calls this the period *al-shiddah al-mustanirṣiyah* (the Mustaṣṣirī depression).¹²²

This period was also marked by Armenian–Turkish rivalry for power in Fāṭimid Egypt at least. It began by the appointment of Badr, and for the next century, it was in favor of the former's camp.¹²³ The events show the dimensions of Armenian involvement and role in al-Shām and Egypt during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Salibi summarizes the situation:

Badr was . . . sent to Syria with a force of Berbers and Armenians to deal with the emergency. Taking advantage of his departure, the

Ḥamdānīd amīr Nāṣir al-Dawlah, in conspiracy with Berber officers, immediately proceeded to seize power in Cairo. To keep Badr tied up in Akkā, where he had established his headquarters, and prevent him from coming to the rescue of the caliph, the conspirators incited the Kalb Arabs of central Syria and the Ṭayy Arabs of Palestine to rise in revolt against him. They also encouraged the rebel governor of Damascus, Mu'allā Ibn Ḥaydar, to persist in his defiance of the Fātimid imperial authority, while Ibn Abū 'Aqil successfully held out against the amīr al-ju'yūsh in Tyre. Furthermore, they sent messages to the Seljuk sultan Alp Arslān, inviting him to occupy Syria and overthrow the Fātimids in Egypt. In fact, it was in direct response to this invitation that Alp Arslān advanced across the Euphrates in January 1071 and entered the territory of Aleppo.¹²⁴

Notes

1. See Ardavazt Surmēian, *Patmut'iwn Halēpi Hayoc'- Suria* [History of the Armenians of Aleppo – Syria], 2 vols., vol. I (Aleppo: Ani Press, 1940), vol. II (Beirut: Macsoudian Press, 1946), vol. III (Paris, 1950).
2. Mingana, *Woodbrooke Studies*, vol. IV (Cambridge: 1931), 100.
3. Arshag Alboyajian, *Patmut'iwn Hay Gatt'akanut'ean* [History of Armenian Emigrations], vol. II (Cairo: Nor Astl, 1955), 402.
4. Peter Charanis, *The Armenians in the Byzantine Empire* (Lisbon: Gulbenkian Foundation, 1963), 39.
5. *Ibid.*, 16.
6. *Ibid.*, 29.
7. Nikola Ziādeh, "Joghrāfiyat al-Shām 'inda Joghrāfiyyi al-Qurn al-Rābi' al-Hijri" [The Geography of al-Shām according to the Geographers of the Fourth Century of the Hijrah], in *Al-Mu'tamar al-Dawli li-Ta'rikh Bilād al-Shām fi'l-Jāmi'ah al-Urduniyah* [Proceedings of the International Conference on the History of Bilād al-Shām at the Jordanian University] (Beirut: al-Dār al-Muttaḥidah li'l-Nashr, 1974), 139–79, 153–55. Some of the historians of the ninth and tenth centuries are: Ibn Rastah, *Al-I'lāq al-Nafsiyah*; Qudāma Ibn Ja'far, *Kitāb al-Kharāj wa-Ṣun'at al-Kitābah*; Ya'qūbi, *Kitāb al-Buldān*; al-Maqdisi, *Al-Bishāra*; al-Astarkhī, *Al-Masālik wa'l-Mamālik*. The first geographer to refer to al-Shām as a single unit was al-Ḥamadānī, while al-Maqdisi referred to this region as *Iqlīm al-Shām*. *Ibid.*, 147. Ṭarṣūs, Adana, Maṣīṣah, 'Ayn Zarbah, al-Kanisah, al-Hārūniyah, and P'ayas were *thughūr* of al-Shām, while Mar'ash, Zabtara, Kaysūm, Ḥiṣn Manṣūr, Samosata were part of the *Jazīrah* in the eastern part of al-Shām.
8. Michael the Syrian, *Chronique de Michel le Syrien-Patriarche Jacobite d'Antioche*, trans. and ed. J.-B. Chabot, 4 vols. (Paris: Culture et Civilisation, 1899), vol. III, 23.
9. *Ibid.*, 30–31.
10. Alboyajian, *Patmut'iwn Hay Gatt'akanut'ean*, vol. II, 402.
11. Ibn al-'Adīm, *Zubdat al-Ḥalab min Ta'rikh Ḥalab* [The Cream of the History of Aleppo], ed. Sāmi Dahhān, 3 vols., vol. I (Damascus: Al-Ma'had al-'Arabī bi-Dimashq li'l-Dirāsāt al-'Arabiyyah, 1951–1968), 141–44.
12. A. H. Sayce, *Histoire d'une empire oublié* (Paris, 1891), 250.

13. Yahyā Ibn Saʿīd al-Anṭākī, *Taʾriḫ al-Anṭākī al-Maʾrūf bi Šlat Taʾriḫ Autikhā* [The History of Saʿīd al-Anṭākī Known as the Continuation/Sequel of the History of Antioch], trans. ʿUmar ʿAbdel-Šalā Tadmurī (Tripoli Lebanon: JP Publishers, 1990), 193–94.
14. Ibid., 194.
15. Kamal Salibi, *Syria under Islam- Empire on Trial 634-1097* (New York: Caravan Books, 1977), 126.
16. Ibid., 127.
17. Charanis, *Armenians*, 34.
18. Ibid., 37.
19. Ibid., 35.
20. Ibid., 39.
21. Ibid., 40.
22. Ibid., 45.
23. Ibn al-ʿAdīm, *Zubdat al-Ḥalab*, vol. I, 199.
24. Arshag Alboyajian, *Patmutʾiwn Hay Galtʾakanutʾean* [History of Armenian Emigrations], vol. I (Cairo: Sahak Mesrop, 1941), 241.
25. Suhayl Zakkār, *The Emirate of Aleppo 1004-10094* (Beirut: Dar al-Amānah wʾal-Risālah, 1971), 55.
26. Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, vol. I, 243.
27. Alboyajian, *Patmutʾiwn Hay Galtʾakanutʾean*, vol. I, 243.
28. Avedis K. Sanjian, *The Armenian Communities in Syria under Ottoman Rule* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965), 7–9.
29. Charanis, *Armenians*, 52.
30. Salibi, *Syria under Islam*, 46.
31. Ibid., 43.
32. Ibid., 45.
33. Ibid., 46.
34. Ibid., 45.
35. Ibid., 48.
36. Al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾriḫ al-Rusul waʾl-Mulūk* [History of Messengers/Prophets and Kings], ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, 10 vols., vol. X (Cairo: Dār al-Maʾārif, 1960–1968), 94.
37. Salibi, *Syria under Islam*, 51.
38. Ibid., 55.
39. Ibid., 60–61.
40. Al-Masʿūdī, Abūʾl-Ḥasan ʿAlī Ibn al-Ḥusayn, *Al-Tanbih waʾl-Ishrāf* [Book of Caution/Warning and Revision] (Cairo: Dār al-Rajāʾ, 1938), 148, 165.
41. Salibi, *Syria under Islam*, 63.
42. Ibid., 65.
43. Ibid., 67.
44. Ibid.
45. Ibn al-ʿAdīm, *Zubdat al-Ḥalab*, vol. I, 133–39.
46. Salibi, *Syria under Islam*, 68.
47. Ibid., 83.
48. Ibid., 84–85.
49. Ibid., 85.
50. Ibid., 86.

51. Ibid. Also see Robert Lopez and Irving W. Raymond, *Medieval Trade in the Mediterranean World* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1955).
52. Ibid., 90.
53. Ibid.
54. Ibid., 95–96. Also see Ibn al-Qalānisi, *Dhayl Ta'rikh Dimashq* [History of Ibn al-Qalānisi or the Continuation of the History of Damascus] (Beirut: Maṭba'at al-Ābā' al-Yasū'iyyīn, 1908), 53–54.
55. Ibid., 98.
56. Ibn al-'Adīm, *Zubdat al-Halab*, vol. I, 204.
57. Zakkār, *Emirate of Aleppo*, 139.
58. Ibn al-'Adīm, *Zubdat al-Halab*, vol. I, 213–14; Salibi, *Syria under Islam*, 99.
59. Zakkār, *Emirate of Aleppo*, 59–60.
60. Ibid., 116.
61. Ibid., 118.
62. Ibid., 164.
63. Ibid., 149.
64. Ibid., 155.
65. Muḥammad Salīm al-Jundī, *Ta'rikh Ma'rrat al-Nu'mān* [History of Ma'arrat al-Nu'mān], vol. I (Damascus: Wizarat al-Thaqāfah wa'l-Ilshād al-Qawmī, 1963–1965), 134.
66. Zakkār, *Emirate of Aleppo*, 240.
67. Ibid., N #13, 240.
68. Al-Jundī, *Ta'rikh Ma'rrat al-Nu'mān*, 134.
69. See Ibn al-'Adīm, *Zubdat al-Halab*, vol. I, 232–34.
70. Zakkār, *Emirate of Aleppo*, 244.
71. Ibid., 245–49.
72. Ibid., 250.
73. Ibid., 252.
74. Ibid.
75. Ibid., 240.
76. Ibid., 84. [From Ibn Abī Ḥasīna, al-Ḥasan Ibn 'Abd Allāh, *Dīwān Ibn Abī Ḥasīna*, ed. As'ad Ṭalās (Damascus: 1956), pt I, 3, 8, 13.]
77. Ibn Ab Ḥasīna, *Diwān Ibn Abī Ḥasīna*, I, 15.
78. Zakkār, *Emirate of Aleppo*, 78.
79. Ibid., 82.
80. Salibi, *Syria under Islam*, 102.
81. Ibid., 103.
82. Ibid., 104–5. This is quoted in Yāqūt, al-Shaykh al-Imām Shihāb ed-Dīn Abū 'Abdallāh al-Ḥamawī al-Rūmī al-Baghdādī, *Mu'jam al-Buldān* [Book of Chronicles of Egyptian Viziers], vol. V (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1955–1957), 6.
83. M.-J. Laurent, *Byzance et les Turcs Seldjoukides dans l'Asie occidentale jusqu'en 1081* [Byzantium and Seljukid Turks in Western Asia Minor until 1081] (Paris: Berger Levraux, 1914), 67; Alboyajian, *Patmut'iwn Hay Galt'akanut'ean*, vol. I, 251–52.
84. M.-J. Laurent, *L'Arménie entre Byzance et l'Islam depuis le conquête arabe jusqu'à 886* [Armenia between Byzantium and Islam from the Arab Conquest to 886] (Paris: 1919), 4–5.

85. Alboyajian, *Patmut'iwn Hay Gatt'akanut'ean*, vol. II, 404.
86. Ibid., 112.
87. Robert Bedrosian, "Armenia during the Seljuk and Mongol Periods," in *The Armenian People from Ancient to Modern Times*, ed. R. G. Hovannisian, 2 vols., vol. I (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 241–71, 244.
88. Salibi, *Syria under Islam*, 113.
89. Ibid., 114.
90. Bedrosian, "Armenia during the Seljuk and Mongol Periods," 244.
91. Ibid., 246.
92. Salibi, *Syria under Islam*, 114. Also see C. Cahen, "The Turkish Invasion," in *A History of the Crusades*, ed. Kenneth M. Setton, vol. I (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, c. 1955–1962), 135–76.
93. Laurent, *Byzance*, 67.
94. Leo (Aṙak'çl Papaxanean), *Erkeri Žotovacu* [Collected Works], 10 vols. (Erevan: Hayastan Publications, 1967–1987), vol. II (1967), 892–93.
95. Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, vol. III, 158.
96. Aristakčs Lastivertc', *Patmut'iwn* [History], trans. V. Gēworgēan (Erevan: Hayastan Publications, 1971), 38–40, 57.
97. Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, vol. III, 159.
98. Speros Vryonis Jr., "Patterns of Population Movement in Byzantine Asia Minor," in *Studies on Byzantium, Seljuks, and Ottomans*, ed. Speros Vryonis Jr., vol. II (Malibu, CA: Undena Publications, 1981), VI, 3–19, 5–9.
99. See Ibid., 3–19.
100. H. A. R. Gibb, *The Damascus Chronicle of the Crusaders* (Extracted and translated from *The Chronicle of Ibn al-Qalānisi*) (London: Luzac, 1932), Introduction, 14.
101. Ibid., 29.
102. Ibid., 33.
103. See Sa'īd 'Abd al-Fattāḥ 'Āshūr, "al-Mujtama' al-Islāmī fī Bilād al-Shām fī 'Aṣr al-Ḥurūb al-Ṣalibiyyah" [Islamic Society in Bilād al-Shām during the Crusader Wars], in *Al-Mu'tamar al-Dawli li-Ta'rikh Bilād al-Shām Fī'l-Jāmi'ah al-Urduniyah*, 219–44.
104. Ibid., 237.
105. Ibid., 232.
106. Gibb, *Damascus Chronicle*, 28.
107. Ibid.
108. Shākir Muṣṭafā, "Dukhūl al-Turk al-Ghuzz ilā al-Sham," in *Al-Mu'tamar al-Dawli li-Ta'rikh Bilād al-Shām fī'l-Jāmi'ah al-Urduniyah*, 303–98, 309. (The article deals with the history of al-Shām in 1055/447H–1079/472H.)
109. Ibid., 315.
110. Ibid., 316.
111. Ibn al-'Adīm, *Zubdat al-Halab*, vol. I, 273.
112. Ibid., 295. For Ibn Khān, see Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, IX, 233–34; Ibn al-Qalānisi, *Dhayl*, 92–93.
113. Ibn al-'Adīm, *Zubdat al-Halab*, vol. I, 296–97.
114. Salibi, *Syria under Islam*, 128.
115. Muṣṭafā, "Dukhūl al-Turk," 325.
116. Ibid., 340.
117. Salibi, *Syria under Islam*, 129.

118. Ibid., 118.
119. Ibid., 120.
120. Ibid., 121.
121. Ibid., 125.
122. Muṣṭafā, "Dukhūl al-Turk," 349.
123. See Ibn Shaddād al-Ḥalabī, 'Izz ed-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn 'Alī, *Al-A'lāq al-Kabīrah fī Dhikr Umarā' al-Shām wa'l-Jazīrah* [Great Descriptions of the Princes of al-Shām and al-Jazīrah], ed. Sāmī Dahhān (Damascus: Institut Français de Damas, 1962), 165.
124. Salibi, *Syria under Islam*, 126.

Armenian–Byzantine and Armenian–Islamic Realpolitik and Peripheral Principalities

I. Armenian–Byzantine Realpolitik and Peripheral Principalities, Eleventh to Twelfth Centuries

Due to the weakening of Armenian dynastic houses, the annexation of their estates to Byzantium, and the militarization of various factions, Armenians belonging to various strata and backgrounds interacted with regional powers and cultures free from the legacies, loyalties, and criteria of orthodoxy that had accumulated since the fifth century. In fact, despite the apparent loss of national sovereignty, Armenians were more politicized than ever before. Unlike the previous periods, when politics and culture were the privileges of the nobility and the church, during this phase, individuals and groups of mostly military and heterodox backgrounds were involved in politics at a regional level. During the 1060s and before the last quarter of the eleventh century, there were more than a dozen Armenian principalities in north Syria and eastern Asia Minor. Historians seem to have failed to realize that Armenian Cilicia had its beginnings and was shaped precisely in and because of these circumstances.

As mentioned, consecutive deportations and settlements of Armenian communities brought large Armenian communities into Kamurj, Jibin, Behesni, Sewawerak, Srüj, T'lkuran, Artāh, and many other places between the Euphrates and Antioch, where the Monophysites were the majority of the Christians.¹ Soon, Armenians became the predominant element, and the Armenian Church established new sees in Antioch, Latakiyah, Aphia, Edessa, Samosata, Mar'ash, Țarşûş, Maşşîşah, Anarzarva (or 'Ayn Zarba), and so on.² The ruins along the River Orontes stand as testimonies of Armenian villages, such as Ghenayah,

Ya'qūbiyah, Kassāb, P'ayas, Jisr al-Shughūr, Ḥārim, and even Ḥamāh in the southeast. Armenians began arriving in Aleppo after the consecutive Mamlūk invasions of Cilicia, that is, at the end of the thirteenth and the beginning of the fourteenth centuries. The battle of Manazkert, which took place in 1071, served as a turning point in Near Eastern history. Romanos IV Diogenes was defeated by a coalition of various factions, including many Armenians, under Seljuk Alp Arslān. Turkish victory led to the opening of the region before them and the disruption of routes between the east and the west. More importantly, it also contributed to the rise of Armenian power in the region. C. Cahen says,

Never before had the Armenians played such a great part in the history of the Near East as they did at this most somber moment in their history of national independence. Transported [there] as military colonies by Byzantium or having emigrated spontaneously to escape the Turkish invasions, they dispersed throughout Cappadocia, the Taurus and Cilicia; they were found in diverse locations of Diyār Moḍar, where Edessa was a semi-Armenian city, and so was Sevaverak. There were Armenians in all the towers and fortresses of the province of Tall Bāshir; in north Syria the Armenian colonies were known to have existed in Antioch, Latakiyah, Artālḥ Aphamia, Kafardubbīn, and even in the plains. And from there, they spread in lesser numbers into southern Syria; a great many emigrated to Egypt, where the troops recruited by Badr al-Jamālī at the end of the eleventh century and his son al-Afḍal at the beginning of the twelfth century, Armenian converts to Islam, triumphed over the rebellious Negroes and Turks and halted the disintegration of Fātimid Egypt; [later on] we will find a non-converted Armenian vizier at the time of caliph al-Ḥāfiz.³

He goes on to say that it was this Armenian concentration in the Syro-Anatolian world and the middle Euphrates that became the subject of the epic poems of *Digenis Akritis* on the Byzantine side and *Dhū al-Himma* or *Sayyid Baṭṭāl* on the Muslim side.⁴ Armenians had their churches and bishoprics in Samosata, Mar'ash, Ṭarṣūs, Maṣṣīṣah, Anarzarva, Antioch, Latakiyah, Aphamia, and so on.⁵ In the context of his discussion of these times and locations, Cahen makes an interesting remark about the languages used. He says that even though Arabic was the predominant language for both Muslims and Christians (Syriac was a liturgical language), Armenians exclusively spoke their native language.⁶

The entire region was in extreme political, social, and religious fragmentation and a number of territorial lords or "seigneurs" appeared

at the time.⁷ On the arrival of the Crusaders in Asia Minor around 1097/491H, there were four major Armenian principalities in the peripheral regions of al-Shām headed by Philaretus in Germanica, an associate of his Goł Vasil (from the heterodox Ghazarik clan) in Kaysūm and Ra'bān, Gabriel in Melitene, and T'oros in Edessa. Between the valleys of the Euphrates and Orontes, there were several other territorial principalities: Rāwandān (just north of Killis), Andriun (near Mar'ash), Covk' (southeast of Hanzīt and Xarbert), Bīra (Bāriya, Birejik on the Euphrates south of Qal'at al-Rūm or Hromkla), Tall Bāshir (on the River Sājūr, south of Ayntāb), Gargar/Jarjar (on the Euphrates, southeast of Melitene), and the principality of Banū Sumbul (Samvėl/Sambil/Samwil, just north of Samosata).

The Armenian lords in Mar'ash, Melitene, Edessa, and Kaysūm, in theory at least, were the vassals of Byzantium on its southeastern frontiers. Some had converted to the Chalcedonian faith; otherwise, their backgrounds and religious affiliations were obscure. As border guards, they were allowed some privileges, but after the Byzantine defeat at Manazkert, they were simply abandoned to local circumstances. Some allied with the Turks and/or whoever was in their vicinity, and made the most of the power vacuum, at least on the arrival of the Crusaders. Almost all these territorial lords failed to gain the sympathy of their subjects and compatriots. The Chalcedonian faith of some and the realpolitik of all seem to be reasons for their unpopularity among Armenians, even though these figures provided protection for their compatriots.

II. The T'ondrakian-Ismā'ili Connection—Gorg, Lazar, and T'oros as Missing Link “Brigands” and the Rise of a Heterodox Ruling Class on the Frontiers

One of the factors in the sudden proliferation of warlords in the region at this time was the peculiarity of their power base. Most, if not all, of their fighters seem to be of peculiar backgrounds. Some of these Armenian fighters were Chalcedonian and came from the Byzantine armies. However, most were militant dissidents commonly referred to in the sources of the period as T'ondrakians, at large, on the Borderlands and in north Syria. Medieval Armenian and Syriac historians consistently refer to these types as *bandits*, *brigands*, *outlaws*, and so on. As mentioned, after the persecutions of Grigor Magistros, they spread into north Syria, some parts of Upper Mesopotamia and the Euphrates. Apart from derogatory remarks in the few Armenian histories

of these times, Armenian histories provide almost no information on these principalities or Armenian life over there.

Direct links are traceable between heterodox factions in the north and the growth of extra-establishment Armenian power in al-Shām and Egypt. Furthermore, the phenomenon of the Armenian Period in Fāṭimid Egypt can only be understood and explained in this perspective. One of the few missing links—that has, in turn, gone undetected—in the Armenian Intermezzo in al-Shām (as discussed in Chapter 1) is the clan of Łazarik (Ghazarik, from Ghazar/Lazarus, “*ik*” and “*ak*” are diminutive suffixes used in Armenian names, such as Połos, Połosik, , Połosak. Łazar is first mentioned in an epistle addressed by Grigor Magistros (d. 1058) to the Syrian Patriarch. He referred to a T’ondrakian heresiarch Łazar or “red-haired dog Łazar” and six other leaders.⁸ With many of their followers, these figures were expelled, as Magistros explained, to north Syria (*Asorik’*). Bar Hebraeus and Michael the Syrian also speak of the clan of “Bēnē Bazrik” or “Bēnē Ghazarik” around the year 1066/459H (twelve years after the persecutions of Magistros) in Claudia and Qubbos, on the Euphrates, southeast of Melitene. Similar to the Armenian authors, Michael the Syrian too uses the term *brigand* and/or *bandit* (a synonym of Armenian *got*, *eluzak*) to refer to heretics and dissidents. He relates that at this time, some “brigands of the Armenian race” pillaged the convent of Mar Bar Sauma. They had “revolted against the [Byzantine] emperors on the occasion of the invasion of the Turks,” and although they “claimed to be Christians,” they were nothing but “ravening wolves.”⁹

These descriptions are identical to those of Magistros, who repeatedly mentions that although the T’ondrakians and the sectarians, in general, claimed to be “true Christians,” they were, in fact, nothing but wild “dogs” or “wolves.” The Paulician and other heretics were called dogs in Byzantine medieval sources, and Magistros, being Greek educated and a Hellenophile, was simply using the same description. According to Michael the Syrian, the “brigands” of the Bēnē Ghazarik were active in many areas. They eventually gathered around Melitene, where they settled in mountain fortresses. From these strongholds, they pillaged the monasteries of Maḏīq, Mar Asyā, Beit Saḥdeh, Marcus, and the “admirable” monastery of Sargisiyah.¹⁰ In practices identical to those of the other Armenian sectarians of the tenth and eleventh centuries and which are described by Ōrbelean and Artistakēs, Michael the Syrian related that Łazar’s men

... spilled the holy oil, using batons they shattered the remains of the saints Sergius and Bacchus and the other relics of the monasteries and churches. They threw them away ... and pretended ignorance as their excuse. But in fact they were liars and pagans at heart. ... They also took money and animals from the villages of Singis [Šēncē] and Maḏīq. ... In order to prevent them from doing further harm] the chiefs of Melitene ... gave them portions of land in Goubbos and Claudia. They obtained certificates [of ownership] from the [Byzantine] emperor, in accordance of which the four villages of the region were conceded to them, in exchange for peace ... they showed a hypocritical face to the [Muslim] chiefs and pillaged the poor populace ... with devilish incitement the brigands invaded the Monastery of Mar Bar Sauma, where they killed the monks, and from there they conducted their activities against the surrounding villages.¹¹

During August 1066/459H, at the news of Seljuk invasions in Melitene, the Łazariks escaped with the local population of Claudia into the mountains of Mar Bar Sauma.¹² In 1068, when the Catepan of Melitene died, the Seljuks spread in the region. The name of Łazarik's son, Goł Vasil, or Basil the thief, appears for the first time in the context of these accounts of pillaging and terror by his clan. Finally, Philaretus, a formidable figure, came on the stage and recruited all the brigands in his larger project of a land of his own. He and other figures at the time assisted the Turks in the battle of Manazkert, while still maintaining their ties with Byzantium.

This is the background of not only Goł Vasil, the son of T'ondrakian "Red Haired Dog Łazar" (who was to inherit an important part of Philaretus's land) but also many of the associates of Philaretus. Militant and heterodox Armenians, who were already in the region, joined these warlords; many moved to the south into al-Shām just before or with the Turkmens and the Seljuks later on. Many seem to have converted to Islam and enrolled in the troops of various Muslim factions and figures, as can be observed in many sources.

In the fragmented and still obscure history of these times, a certain Gorg (Gēworg/George) Širakac'ī or Anec'ī should also be briefly considered. He was one of the pirates and/or brigands who was active between the years 1056/448H and 1066/458.¹³ Matthew of Edessa relates that some Antiochans, who anyway hated Armenians, attacked Gorg while he was visiting the city. They robbed and humiliated him by cutting off his beard. Gorg's enemies do not seem to be ordinary citizens but urban militant youth, because Matthew describes them as "*beledik*" (*baladī*, local, native, and the equivalent of ahl), a term

used to refer to the Syrian aḥdāth. Elsewhere, Matthew says that it was with the assistance of these beledik's that Seljuk Sulaymān took control of the city in 1084–1085/477–478.¹⁴ He adds,

They [the “beledik”] claimed to be Roman in faith but in reality they should be regarded as Muslims because of the language they use and because of their deeds . . . resembling sick and feeble women who sit on the streets and babble.¹⁵

Gorg was said to be from the brigands of the Bēnē Łazarik, and true to his background, he returned with a group of Turkish fighters and “occupied the whole province of Antioch.” Gorg destroyed twelve villages owned by the Duke of Antioch, slaughtered his captives before the walls of Antioch, and standing before the gates of the city, he shouted at the people of Antioch by asking them whether what they suffered was worth his beard.¹⁶ In some medieval books of Armenian heresies, a certain sect of Gorguians is mentioned in Cilicia. Gorg, the founder, was said to have been a native of the region of Cilicia. He had found refuge in cosmopolitan city of Erzuka/Erzinjān, a city that traditionally had become a haven for both Christian and Muslim sectarians. He was said to have held views very similar to most T'ondrakians. Later on, some leading figures in the Brotherhood of Erzuka and a certain Yakob Manktawag (elder in the urban coalition of youth or the *manuks*, brothers), in particular, were said to be Gorguians. Yakob was a leading figure in the sect and had defected from Cilicia to Erzuka. Everything seems to be related to links between this Gorg from the Bēnē Łazarik and the Gorguians of Erzuka.¹⁷ We will discuss this subject at length in Chapter 5.

Edessa, east of Kaysūm (*K'esun* in Armenian), was one of the most important vassal city states of Philaretus. It was mainly inhabited by Armenians and was under Turkish assaults until 1071. After the fall of Manazkert, Philaretus took Edessa and appointed T'oros as governor over Diyār Muḍar as well. Similar to his associates, T'oros was a man of an obscure background and scandalous conduct. As a subordinate of Philaretus, he was made a curopalate (*Kouropalates*, a Byzantine honorary title for generals), and was expected to guard the eastern borders of the empire. Powerless before the Turks, he withdrew to Melitene, where Gabriel, his son-in-law, was governor. In 1094/487H, T'oros was reinstated in his position by Tutush, the Seljuk ruler of Syria and managed to remain there until 1096/489H. When the latter died,

T'oros went to Aleppo, where Ruḍwān, the son and successor of the Seljuk Tutush, lived. The latter had many Armenians in his troops or the *'askar*.¹⁸ T'oros had a strange epithet: He was called the "Old Man of the Mountain" (*shaykh al-jabal*). Cahen suggests that other Armenian rulers in the region may have also had this epithet,¹⁹ but so far, it has not been possible for this author to find another such example.

A more plausible hypothesis is that as a heterodox and militant figure (not necessarily a "pure" Chalcedonian), T'oros had connections with the Bāṭinīs or the Ismā'īlīs of Aleppo and Ruḍwān, in particular. The latter was known for his Ismā'īlī sympathies and heavily relied on the Ismā'īlī aḥdāth of the city. The historian Ibn al Qalānīsī says that a "person known as *al-hakīm al-munajjim* [physician-astrologer] the Bāṭinī from the entourage of Fakhr al-Mulūk Ruḍwān, lord of Aleppo, was the first to profess the doctrines of the Bāṭiniyah in Aleppo and Syria."²⁰ Ruḍwān was the first who allowed the sect to open missionary houses (*dūr al-da'wah*) in his province under the direction of a "Persian physician-astrologer, who in the first few years of the twelfth century was replaced by another Persian, Abū Ṭāhir the goldsmith." Later on, there was another mission house in Sarmin near Aleppo,²¹ and the sect became very active in the province.

Known as a brigand and a renegade, T'oros may have been an Ismā'īlī sympathizer, as many T'ondrakians of the time were Persian-Shī'ī sympathizers. A brutal pragmatist and an adventurer such as T'oros would easily and proudly have given himself an Ismā'īlī epithet. Sinān, the Ismā'īlī leader in Syria, was called *shaykh al-jabal* or the "old man of the mountain." From the ninth to the twelfth centuries, the T'ondrakians were said to have had very close links with the Persian or the Majūsi-Islamic sects. According to Magistros and Aristakēs Lastivertc'i (as discussed in the first volume of this work), they were trained in the majūsi (or Zoroastrian) tradition as astrologer physicians. However, the term Ismā'īlī was never mentioned in either these sources or other Armenian sources. The founder of T'ondrakism, Smbat Zarehawanc'i was said to have been trained by a "*majusi* [or *mjusik*] Persian-astrologer-physician," as per all sources. Leo says,

Undoubtedly Smbat was deeply inspired by the liberal Persian mind, which on the one hand established atheism at the [Abbāsīd] court in Baghdad and on the other spread Khurramid communalism on the mountains of Atrpatakan. Smbat was a contemporary of Babak, whose teachings [Khurramism] he had assimilated.²²

Aristakēs ascribes a similar doctrinal training and background to another T'ondrakian heresiarch, a monk called *Kuncik*. He was active in the first years of the eleventh century in the province of Mananaḡi, near Erznka.²³ Significantly, Ibn al-'Adīm describes the Ismā'īlī missionaries (or the *bāṭinī dā'īs*) in Aleppo during the early eleventh century as "Persian astrologer-physicians." We find similar descriptions in Ibn al-Athīr as well.²⁴

There is strong evidence that suggests close T'ondrakian-Ismā'īlī connections. In general, the similarities between the doctrines of the Armenian and Muslim dissident trends are very intriguing and deserve special attention. Almost nothing is done in this regard, with the exception of some work by this author. However, the common ideological elements would have been of limited influence without the circumstances that necessitated and facilitated cooperation between these factions. In other words, intensive and unbiased historiographic analysis of these aspects of Armenian and Near Eastern studies is overdue.

After the disintegration of the 'Abbāsīd administration and the power vacuum that emerged between the Islamic and Byzantine empires, ideal conditions were created for the militant Paulicians.²⁵ Since the Armenian population was concentrated in and around cities from Upper Mesopotamia to al-Shām, neither the 'Abbāsīds nor any other power had absolute control. The relationship between the militant heterodox factions, such as the Paulicians and T'ondrakians, and their compatriots was similar to that between the later Nizārī Assassins and orthodox Muslims. The Armenian Church also considered these figures outlaws, bandits, rogues, and so on.

According to Matthew of Edessa, in 1078/471H, two *hastats*, as it appears in one of the manuscripts of his *Chronicle*, assassinated the Byzantine Duke of Antioch, Vasak Pahlawuni, a son of Grigor Magistros.²⁶ Since the word appears as *hadads* in another manuscript, the word seems to have referred to the urban *ḥadaths* or simply the *aḥdāth*.²⁷ *Ḥadath* is the singular of *aḥdāth*, and it seems that Matthew was using the Armenian plural form of the word in transliteration (since the letter "dh" or *dhāl* in Arabic has no Armenian equivalent).

Close connections link the dissident T'ondrakians of the eleventh century, the Armenian territorial lords, and the Bāṭinīs or the Ismā'īlīs in Upper Mesopotamia and al-Shām. T'oros of Edessa is the missing link, and his career does indeed unravel some "mysteries." Caught

between the Byzantines, the incoming Crusaders, and the Turks, his realpolitik worked for a while. When the Crusaders arrived, afraid of the Turks and having lost his powerful ally Philaretus in 1086, he invited them to come to Edessa, where he adopted Baldwin as his "spiritual son" by an ancient pagan Near Eastern practice. After a bizarre adoption ritual (standing in the river, T'oros, his wife, and Baldwin tucked in a single large shirt rubbing breasts), Baldwin became coruler of Edessa. According to A. Bridge, the Armenian population of Edessa, who were mainly Armenian, despised T'oros, and with the connivance of Baldwin, they killed him. However, they soon regretted their own action. By marrying the daughter of T'at'ul, Baldwin acquired more land in the province of Jihun,²⁸ and then in 1098, he expelled his father-in-law, and became the lord of Edessa.²⁹ Eventually, the disillusioned Armenians of the city attempted to organize a rebellion against Baldwin and his knights, but the plot was discovered and violent reprisals followed.

Melitene was an Armenian principality as well as a vassal of Philaretus at the time. It had become a mainly Armenian city after the Arabs left, and Armenians were brought in. Gabriel, the son-in-law of T'oros, who was also known as a renegade and a controversial figure, was installed there as its governor by Philaretus. After the latter's death and until 1092 he simply placed himself under the sovereignty of the Muslim Armenian Dānishmandids, while still nominally remaining subject to Byzantium.³⁰

Philaretus gave Kaysūm to Goł Vasil, the son of Łazar. According to Alboyajian, the Łazariks were originally from Ani. After the fall of that city to the Seljuks in 1065, Łazar gathered about three hundred "thieves" (or brigands), according to Bar Hebraeus, repeating Michael the Syrian, and conducted raids on the monasteries and villages in the mountains of Melitene. They were eventually given some villages to stop their raids. Goł Vasil's role and significance gained importance after the death of Philaretus in 1086. He not only inherited a good part of the latter's state but also, and despite his background, assumed the leadership of the Armenians in his region.

As the successor of Philaretus, Goł Vasil was also granted the title of *sevastos* by Byzantium, and controlled Mar'ash, Ra'bān, Qal'at al-Rūm or Hromkla, Tall Bāshir, and Bīra. After 1092, he expanded his land even further. Rivalries with his brother Bagrat (or Bagarat) were exploited by the Crusaders (the *franji*/Franks, as they were referred to by the Arabs),

who promised the latter to transfer to him whatever they confiscated from Vasil.³¹ The latter had acquired diplomatic skills after a long and hard experience with Greeks and Turks, then a career in the circle of Philaretus. He managed to gain the confidence of Byzantium, the Seljuks, and the Franks and assisted the latter against the Turks, or did the opposite. In 1109, he defeated Shah i-Arman Suqmān al-Quṭbi of Khlāt. He died in October 1112, and his adopted son (and nephew) Tlay Vasil (or junior Basil, 1112–1115) succeeded him.³²

The case of the small town of Rawandān in north Syria (just north of Killis and southwest of Ayntāb), and its ruler Bagrat, Goṯ Vasil's brother, is another example of Frankish–Armenian–Seljuk rivalry in al-Shām. Philaretus had appointed Bagrat as the ruler of Rawandān. When the Franks began acquiring lands in the region, Bagrat betrayed his brother Vasil and sided the Franks against the Turks too, who were his allies for a while. He accompanied Baldwin to Tall Bāshir, hoping to regain control over the fortresses around Kaysūm that his brother controlled. "The population being Armenian," says Cahen, "Baldwin had no difficulty in occupying Tall Bāshir and Rawandān." However, after a brief period there, the Franks tortured Bagrat and made him give it up, which he did; then, with Armenian assistance and in particular that of Kostandin, the Armenian governor of Gargar, the Franks moved to Samosata.³³

There were other smaller Armenian populated/controlled territories between the valleys of the Euphrates and the Orontes, around Aleppo, and near Samosata (the land of the Armenian clan of Banū Sambīl, north of Samosata).³⁴ In 1078–1079, the small town of Andriun that was nearby was also established by Philaretus. A certain Ebext (probably a Pahlawuni) was its lord. After a while, it became the estate of Prince Apirat (married to the daughter of Magistros).³⁵ Covk' (just southeast of Xarbert) was established around 1045, when Grigor Magistros settled there in exchange for his estate on the mainland. He transferred it to Apirat, who was succeeded by his son Vasil. Philaretus took Covk' and settled the Arab clan of Abū'l-Jahāb there.³⁶ Bīra on the Euphrates, south of Hīromkla, was the estate of the Pahlawunis from the middle of the tenth century to 1117, when we first hear of its lord Abellārib, a relative of the Pahlavunis. Despite their cooperation with the Crusaders, the population was driven away and settled in Anarzarva and Bīra, which became Crusader territories.³⁷ Tall Bāshir, south of Ayntāb, was under the Pahlawunis for a while,

but after 1145, it became Seljuk territory. The brothers Constantine, Mik'aēl, and Yovhannēs were lords over Gargar, Keyakhta, and Bayt Būza'a, respectively, on and around the Euphrates, between Melitene and Edessa.³⁸

III. Armenian–Muslim Realpolitik: Muslim–Armenian Powers

The situation on the Borderlands between the Byzantine and Muslim sides and Seljuk expansion provided a context for the growth of Muslim–Armenian elements. Equally important and more essential were other factors such as the politicization and acquisition of military experience of many Armenians—both orthodox and heterodox—and the collapse of the Armenian political infrastructures in the historic lands. Most of the prominent figures of this phase were Armenians of military and/or heterodox backgrounds. They came on the stage in a variety of “attires.” The Dānishmandids were identified as “Turks” and the Nāwikīs/Awaqīs, as “Ghuzz/Turkmens,” and as discussed in this chapter and the next, they were both of Georgian–Armenian descent. They were a part of the Turkish onslaught, and were identified as “Turks” not for their ethnicity, but for their military background, as was the practice then. Earlier on, in the ninth century, the Turks were the majority in private and more formal troops. Since most of the fighters of the tenth century and the next century as well were Turks, the term came to mean warrior; even Badr al-Jamālī was described as a *Turk* in some sources. During the early decades of Turkish expansion in Asia Minor, the Nāwikīs too came on the stage as a Ghuzz/Turkmen clan. They were, in fact, political converts, such as Philaretus and the Banū Boghusaks.

A. The Turkish and Turkmen Attires

1. The Nāwiki/Bāwīqī/Yāruqī/Awaqīs: Amīr Ktrič, Ibn Khān, and Aqsiz/Atsiz

I propose the Georgian–Armenian ethnic background of the Nāwikīs as a totally novel case. Also known as Awaqīs, Bāwikīs, Yāruqīs, and Yāwuqīs, they were a clan of an obscure background yet often referred to in the histories of early Turkmen penetration into al-Shām. The three figures around whom the discussion seems to revolve are Amīr Ktrič-Arisighi in Asia Minor, and Ibn Khān and Aqsiz/Atsiz in al-Shām. There are several figures of lesser significance as well. Even though most historians granted their Turkmen background, some

occasionally questioned it. They were “a special kind of people (*shaʿb*) of Turks who called themselves Nāwīkīs,” says modern historian Muṣṭafā. He adds,

... the name attracts our attention, because it does not appear in al-Kashgarī's *Dīwān* of Turkish languages of that particular period, also it is not included in the list of the Ghuzz tribes. It is sometimes written as al-Yāwīqī. The Nāwīkīs were not in good terms with the Seljuks, on the other hand, they stood apart [*tafarrud*] from the Ghuzz tribes too.³⁹

Even though they were said to be from Khwarizm, Muṣṭafā suggests the possibility that they may have been “local factions” who were essentially avoiding the Seljuks and assumed a Ghuzz identity for their safety. He then wonders whether a connection may be established between Awaq, their ancestor, and Nawūq or Yāwuq or Yāruq. He mentions that a century later, the Yāwuqīs/Yāruqīs in the troops of Zankī Nūr ed-Dīn of Aleppo were of the same clan. He does seem to know (as this author has shown elsewhere and will be indicated later) that Cilician Great Prince Mleh (d. 1175) had a Nāwīkī/Yāruqī wife. Muṣṭafā suggests several alternatives to throw some light on the ethnic identity of this clan, because he is certain that the Nāwīkīs were not what they claimed to be.

In my opinion, and based on their entire career, originally from Georgia, this clan simply rode the tide and enrolled in the early Turkish expansion into eastern and central Asia Minor and al-Shām. The ambiguity surrounding the ethnic background of this clan and the circumstances of their arrival and career in al-Shām support my hypothesis about their non-Ghuzz background. Furthermore, the name of their ancestor Awaq or Avak/g (there is no “g” in Arabic) is a purely Armenian word; it is also used as a name, means *elder*, *senior*, and can serve as a lead to the etymology of the word ‘Awaqī’ and all its distorted forms, as mentioned above.

In central Asia Minor, the Nāwīkīs were led by an amīr, whose name also appears in several and intriguing forms. He is “Amīr Ktrič Arisighī” in Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī, “Arisifi” in al-Bandarī, and “Raysighī” or “Azisghar” in al-Lawandī.⁴⁰ In Greek sources, he is Krisko Skolos, “Asiskono,” or simply “Amīr Ktrič.” Ktrič is an Armenian word. Used as an adjective, it means ‘brave’; but used as a noun, it means ‘brave young man,’ the exact equivalent of the Arabic *fatā*. Just as the word *fatā* became a technical term to refer to the members of the urban youth coalitions

or the *Futuwwa*, the word *ktrič* was, in turn, used for the members of the Armenian urban youth coalitions as of the fourteenth century and even earlier, and to the end of the nineteenth century as well. Once on the Borderlands, where in addition to Greeks and Muslims militant factions of heterodox backgrounds were at large, this man may have taken on the epithet *ktrič*—similar to the local brave Armenian *gerrillas* (as in *Digenis Akritis*), or the bandits. Otherwise, why would a Turkmen chieftain want to use an Armenian epithet, when he could use any other local, Arabic, or Turkish term?

Amir Ktrič also appears in Matthew's *Chronicle* and most other sources of the period. Matthew fills in some gaps about this typically *akritic* (or pertaining/belonging to borderlands) militant faction. According to the story of Ibn al-Jawzī, Nāwīkī Amir Ktrič was married to Jawhar Khaṭūn, who was a sister of Alp Arslān (1063/455H–1073/465H). Jawhar was killed in 1073/466H by Malikshāh, when she tried to escape to join her husband. It seems that the Seljuks were not in good terms with this clan. Ktrič was initially in the company of Alp Arslān, who was also said to be on good terms with the Greeks.⁴¹ Regardless of this, the Greeks were suspicious of his motives, and when Ktrič wanted to move back to the Seljuk side with his new wife Maryam, according to Ibn al-Jawzī, she refused and it seems that they remained in the region of Cappadocia. Sometime later, he was involved in a battle with Byzantine troops near Sivās. Their commander was captured and then released for a large ransom.⁴²

Matthew of Edessa has a different story. According to him, Ktrič, whom he describes as an “amir,” a “Turk,” and a “compassionate man,” arrived in Sivās around 1069–1070 heading a very large force. On receiving the news, a general was sent from Constantinople against him, but he lost the battle with Ktrič and fell captive. Matthew explains this in detail:

The Armenian king [Gagik II Bagratuni then in exile], the princes [*išxans*, or the Arcrunis and the Bagratunis in Cappadocia] and all the nobles [naxarars] signed a treaty of love and communion [*sēr ew barekamut'iwn*] with the young amir [Ktrič]. The latter took the Curopalate [the Greek general] and three thousand of his troops and secretly arrived in Constantinople, where he was received with great honors.⁴³

While in Constantinople, Tughril wanted the Greeks to hand Ktrič over to him, but the Greeks refused to do so. Either way, this adventurer

met the same tragic end that was awaiting him on the Seljuk side as well. Nothing was heard of him as of this episode. According to Ibn al-Jawzī, his Nāwīkī followers remained in Asia Minor without entering into the service of the Byzantines. Some of them “stayed in their homes in Azerbaijan and Armenia” to avoid the Seljuks, almost confirming my hypothesis about the Armenian roots or “homes” of the Nāwīqīs in Armenia and Azerbaijan. However, the fortunes of the Nāwīqīs changed unexpectedly. “They were running away from Sultān Alp Arslān,” and amīr al-Juyūsh Badr al-Jamālī gained their sympathy and persuaded them to come to al-Shām to fight the Bedouin Arabs who were plundering the cities.⁴⁴ Indeed, the Nāwīkī story will continue in al-Shām.

Tensions between Armenians and Greeks seemed to be a part of the local folklore in the entire eastern part of Asia Minor. The following is a case in this regard. Matthew relates that during early March 1071, Emperor Romanos Diogenes was on his way to Manazkert. Heading a very large army, he reached Sivās, similar to a “thundering black cloud.” The Greek inhabitants of the city complained to him that when Ktrič was attacking them the Armenians of the city slaughtered more Greeks than Turks. “The royal princes Atom and Abusahl [Arcruni] went to him concerning the false accusations of the Greek inhabitants of Sivās against the Armenians of the city.” The Emperor, however, swore to eradicate the Armenian Apostolic faith after his campaign on the “Muslims,” as he put it, at Manazkert.⁴⁵

Nāwīkī history in Asia Minor ends here. Another Nāwīqī leader called *Hārūn Ibn Khān* appeared in Syria but more than a decade earlier. There is very little information that could help in tracing the background of Ibn Khān, except his arrival from Marwānīd Diyār Muḍar,⁴⁶ and his being a Nāwīkī and an uncle of Aqsiz.⁴⁷ He is said to have appeared in al-Shām at the head of Nāwīkīs in 1053–1054, much earlier than Badr’s term as governor there. Muṣṭafā says that on their way to Syria, the Nāwīkīs always avoided the Byzantine fortifications as well as the Turks. In north Syria, Ibn Khān often changed alliances with the Banū Mirdās, the Banū Kilāb, the aḥdāth of Aleppo, and even the Bedouin Arabs of Banū Numayr and Banū Qurayz.⁴⁸ In 1064, his men spread in the region between the Euphrates and Menbij, A’zāz, and al-Raḥbah, north of Aleppo. They refused to enter Aleppo due to some problems that Ibn Khān had with the aḥdāth of the city.⁴⁹ There are reports of “other Turkmens” plundering the villages around Ma’arrat al-Nu’mān around 1066. However, it was said that Ibn Khān’s men had

a very different style of interacting with the local people. Arab sources mention the distinctly disciplined nature of these troops, who were of Kurdish, Turkish, Daylamite, and Ūj (or Ghuzz) backgrounds. "They never took anything, even drinking water," says Ibn al-'Adīm, "without paying its price and never committed injustice against anyone."⁵⁰ He also mentions that Ibn Khān had relatives and nephews (brother's sons) among the Nāwikis who arrived in the south of al-Shām around 1070/463H, called in by Badr al-Jamālī. We know that these nephews were Aqsiz and his brothers.⁵¹ In 1069, Ibn Khān's assistance was requested by Ibn Abū 'Aqīl, the rebellious governor of Tyre/Şūr in south Lebanon, but when Badr al-Jamālī (then Fāṭimid governor of Syria) besieged the city, Ibn Khān joined Badr. In 1070, Ibn 'Aqīl arranged the assassination of Ibn Khān by some of his ghulāms.⁵²

According to Ibn al-Jawzī, "from the year 1069/462, and perhaps earlier, Badr al-Jamālī, then known as the Fāṭimid governor or *wālī* of al-Shām, sent messages to some Turkmens established in al-Rūm and asked them to come to al-Shām to assist him in driving the Bedouin Arabs from the cities in their west."⁵³ The chronicler also mentions Nāwikī leaders, such as Qaralu, Atsiz/Aqsiz, Shaklī, Jawlī, Manklī, and al-Ma'mūn, all of whom were from the "Awaq clan." Badr settled some of these Nāwikis on an *iqṭā'*, or a land provided for them, south of Ma'arrat al-Nu'mān and east of al-Rastan (between Ḥamāh and Ḥimṣ), on the borders of the Syrian *bādiyah* (or the desert). They were treated not as mercenaries but as an independent force, brought in as "watchdogs" and "worthy matches to the Bedouin invaders into the urban regions in the west."⁵⁴

Once in Syria, the Nāwikis first fought the Bedouins, then some of them took the side of the Bedouins against the Fāṭimids. Soon, disputes arose with Badr mainly with regard to financial matters. They asked for more and Badr, who had taken Akkā as his headquarters then, reminded them of their *iqṭā'*s and their own plundering. The Nāwikis, and particularly the Awaq family led by Aqsiz/Atsiz, settled in Ṭabaraya, Palestine, and began working on a project for an autonomous land of their own.⁵⁵ Some, such as Qaralu, remained loyal to Badr and stayed out of the dispute, and on their *iqṭā'* in central Syria.

Atsiz (nameless in Turkish) or Aqsiz (unjust, not-magnanimous in Turkish) became the founder of a short-lived principality or "kingdom"/*mamlakah* in Palestine and south Syria.⁵⁶ Around 1070/464H, he broke off from Badr al-Jamālī and the Fāṭimids. Two years later, he became the "lord of the region" (*sayyid al-manṭiqah*).⁵⁷ "It was in the

year 1071/463H," says Ibn al-Jawzī, "that Atsiz Ibn Awaq, *muqaddam al-atrāk al-ghuzz* [leader, or head of the Ghuzz Turks] appeared and conquered al-Ramlah and Jerusalem and put pressure on [Fāṭimid] Damascus."⁵⁸ His *mamlakah* lasted from 1070/463H to 1078/471H. Little else is known of Atsiz but he raised his clan into some kind of a dynastic power in the south of al-Shām. He controlled the area from the north of Damascus to Palestine and from the start, he acted with a clear objective. Ibn al-Jawzī says,

It is strange to see that the Nāwikīs soon began acting like responsible and true rulers of the land. They concentrated on providing security and food for the population and worked at ensuring financial resources and taxes for the sustenance of the state and the army. They brought peasants into al-Ramlah, which was destroyed by the earthquake of 1068/460, and reconstructed it. They planted olive trees, and the Nāwikī Sultān took only one third of the profit.⁵⁹

The Nāwikīs obviously wanted a land of their own between the two rival Islamic caliphates, the Ismā'īlī Fāṭimids in the west and the Sunnī 'Abbāsids in the east. On the one hand, they mentioned the name of the Seljuk Sultān in their Friday sermon or *khuṭbah*, and on the other, they sought the protection of the Fāṭimid Caliphate, on whose lands they had settled anyway. When in 1072 Atsiz entered Jerusalem, he wrote to the Seljuk Sultān that he had freed the Holy City, and expressed his commitment to reestablish 'Abbāsīd rule there.

Disputes between the Nāwikī brothers Atsiz, Shaklī, and Manklī, around 1075 weakened the clan. Manklī contacted the Banū Kilāb in Aleppo and others. He even contacted Badr and returned to the mention of the Fāṭimid caliph in the *khuṭbah* in 'Akkā. However, his brother Atsiz, Lord of Jerusalem, had the upper hand, and Manklī escaped to Rufaynah in the north, where there were still some Nāwikīs.⁶⁰

Atsiz called himself *al-Malik al-Mu'azzam* (glorified king) and, thus, became the first Turkmen—and, most probably, Armenian—who established a principality in al-Shām.⁶¹ He expanded his control over southern and central Syria as well, with the exception of the coastal towns. However, in 1071, the Greeks were at Manazkert; Alp Arslān hastened back and took the city; and for a while, the Seljuks deferred their decision to move into Syria.⁶²

In 1076/571H, the "kingdom" of Atsiz stretched inland from Ḥimṣ to Palestine, whereas the coast remained under the Fāṭimids. He ruled in the name of the Sunnī Seljuks against the Ismā'īlī Fāṭimids. In

October 1076, he marched toward Egypt, but was defeated by Badr, who organized a "*jihād*," as he put it, and drove him away. On his return to Palestine, Atsiz faced popular discontent; he returned to Damascus in 1076 and again had the name of 'Abbāsīd caliph al-Muqtadī (1075–1094) proclaimed in the mosques of the city.⁶³ According to Ibn al-Athīr, Atsiz put a siege on Jerusalem, then entered, and plundered it. The population was predominantly Christian, many perished in the assault, and only those who were at the Dome of the Rock were spared.⁶⁴

In the north, Tutush moved into al-Shām in 1077 on orders from his brother Malikshāh. In 1079, Badr sent a huge army led by one of his Armenian associates, Naṣr al-Dawlah, to Damascus, while Tutush reached Marj "Adhrā" northeast of Damascus in October 1079. The Fāṭimids withdrew and shortly afterward, the city and the entire al-Shām fell to the Seljuks.⁶⁵

Cahen questions the relevance of applying the usual anti-Fāṭimid and pro-Sunnī attitudes of the Seljuks to the case of Atsiz.⁶⁶ Dissatisfied with the pay, he says that Atsiz simply started his own state in Palestine. He adds,

The episode of Atsiz is interesting as the first successful attempt to establish a Turkmen principality on the western confines of the Saldjūkid empire . . . once he had subdued the country, he took care to restore agriculture. The townspeople, in contrast, complained that he showed no interest in them. The episodes narrated . . . are evidence of his religious indifference. The hostility shown to him by the urban aristocracy, both pro-Saldjūkid and pro-Fāṭimid, doubtless explains in part his evidently good relations with the Christians, especially the Monophysites [?], who in spite of what has been said on the subject, were spared at the time of the Jerusalem massacre in 1078. The idea suggested by many historians that this episode contributed to the preaching of the Crusade in Europe has no basis in facts.⁶⁷

Even though religion was always a means and pretext in the power struggles of the region, it is hard to accept Cahen's remark without questioning. The project undertaken by Atsiz was an aspect of Syrian realpolitik at the time, and he also did what everybody else was doing: siding with 'Abbāsīds, the Fāṭimids, and the Turks depending on circumstances. Even though the Sunnī faith gained priority under Atsiz, he was not a religious fanatic and, in fact, was known for his Christian sympathies.⁶⁸ His special treatment of the so-called *Monophysites* in sources may also support our argument for his Armenian background.

At the time—even today—as anti-Chalcedonians, Armenians were wrongly considered Monophysites. (As previously discussed, Armenians rejected both the Dyophysitism of the Chalcedonians and the Monophysitism of the Eastern Churches, such as the Syrian, Coptic, and Ethiopian Churches. Their Christological formula of “two natures in one” was taken to be a middle yet distinct position, mainly to maintain the independence of the Armenian Church both politically and theologically.)

Atsiz somehow managed to come to terms with the people of Damascus and established himself, but would not be left in peace. In 1078, Badr sent a force to Damascus, and almost at the same time, Malikshāh sent his brother Tāj al-Dawlah Tutush to Syria. When Atsiz asked the assistance of Tutush, the Fāṭimids lifted their siege, and Tutush arrived but not to assist him but to put an end to his kingdom. When the troops of Tutush reached Marj Adhrā, which was northeast of Damascus, in October 1079, Atsiz met them to express his submission. However, he and his brother were immediately executed because of the “suspicions” that Tutush was said to have had about Atsiz from the start, as Ibn al-Qalānīsī believes.⁶⁹

2. The Dānishmandids in Cappadocia—1055/447H–1173/569H

The phenomenon of the Dānishmandids is a very familiar theme in the histories of early Seljuk penetration and the Crusaders. In his typical manner, Lane-Poole simplifies the episode:

Whilst the Seljuks were extending their empire in Asia Minor, another Turkish chief, Gumishtekīn, son of Dānishmand, established his power in Cappadocia over the cities of Siwās (Sebaste), Qays'ariyah [Caesarea], and Malāt'īya [Melitene], near which last place he inflicted a sanguinary defeat upon the Franks [later on]. His successors played a distinguished part in the war of the Crusades, but the dynasty was absorbed into its greater neighbors, the Seljuks of Iconium.⁷⁰

Looked on as a “Turkish” dynasty in Cappadocia, the Dānishmandids were, nevertheless, known for their Armenian descent. Strictly orthodox and a man of the church too, Matthew of Edessa says,

In the year 1105 died Dānishmand⁷¹ the great Amīr of Rūm, who was from the Armenian nation. He was a good and constructive man, immensely benevolent towards the Christians who were his subjects. His death was mourned by all. He left twelve sons, the eldest

of whom, called Ghāzī succeeded him after secretly eliminating all his brothers.⁷²

The Dānishmandid amīrs were said to be the descendants of the Bałwaši-Lipariteans, a prominent Armenian family from Georgia. Liparit III “the Great” was a Byzantine Magistros (1026/417H–1058/450H), who in his old age withdrew to a monastery in Constantinople.⁷³ He had three sons, Rad, Ivanē, and Nianya, the second of whom was given a small state in the province of Haštenic’. He tried to take over the fortified city of Arzn al-Rūm/Karin but was driven away, and “this was the beginning of evils than befell us,” says Aristakēs Lastivertc’i, because Ivanē rebelled against the Byzantines and joined the Seljuks in order to gain their military support.⁷⁴

Earlier on, Liparit III had been captured by Tughril Bek, but was treated with respect due to his high culture and knowledge. He was eventually released in 1051, but his eldest son Rad (short for Hrahad) was kept as a hostage. Rad, son of Liparit, became the founder of the dynasty, and was known as Aḥmad Daylū (Dilū, Taylū, Tilū). He was Alp Arslān’s chamberlain (*hājib*) and the *dānishmand* (tutor, teacher) of his sons. Sometime after the battle of Manazkert, in 1071/464H, Daylū was sent to P’ok’r Hayk’ (Lesser Armenia) at the head of the Seljuk troops. He conquered some territories, at the heart of which was Niksar or Neo-Caesarea, and settled on this part of Cappadocia.⁷⁵ After the death of Malikshāh in 1092, Gumishtekin obtained recognition from his successor for his Cappadocian “dynasty” with its capital in Niksar, controlling Sivās, Melitene, and Caesarea.

Very briefly, this is the background of the Muslim-Armenian Dānishmandids. As Vryonis says, “Muslim society was at all times accessible by conversion, and indeed conversion was welcome.” Conversions happened at all social strata, both earlier and later.⁷⁶ Other members of this family also converted to Islam, and ensured not only the protection of the Seljuks, but also a powerful position for themselves in the region. In 1082, Liparit IV, a nephew of Rad-Aḥmad Tilū Dānishmand, converted to Islam at the court of Malikshāh, but after the latter’s death, his loyalties shifted repeatedly between the Byzantines and the Seljuks.⁷⁷ Despite their Islam, the Dānishmandids did not seem to be fanatical and treated most of their Christian subjects well, similar to what is established by Matthew and Michael the Syrian.⁷⁸

Even though in the medieval Near East, ethnicity was a very secondary matter with little or no political significance, the Armenian

background of the Dānishmandids has bearing on Near Eastern and Armenian historiography. It fills in gaps and suggests new paradigms and images of Armenian political roles that are very different from the narratives in circulation. As mentioned earlier, from 1070 to 1090, five groups/factions converted to Islam, were accepted by the Muslims, and carved places for themselves in regional history. In addition to the Dānishmandids, they were Badr al-Jamālī in Syria and Egypt, the Banū Boghusags in Sevaverak, Philaretus in Mar'ash, and the Nāwikīs/Awāqīs in Syria and Palestine.

Some historians such as Cahen find it hard to understand the pragmatism of the Dānishmandids and/or their being Armenian. Cahen does not find any grounds that accept this background and insists on their being "pure Turks." The "Turkish appearance," of their ancestor Taylū, as stressed by Cahen, is a strange observation. However, it is not clear as to what exactly he refers to by this phrase. Armenians in military and political positions followed the traditions of their allies or sovereigns, depending on circumstances and locations. Aršakunis wore the Persian tunic, the Bagratunis and Arcrunis wore the Arab turban, and Rubenids imitated the Franks, but their "appearance" was never connected to their ethnicity. In this case, the Armenian background of the Dānishmandids has a direct bearing on the patterns of the Armenian experience with Islam. Otherwise, the subject would have been of no significance for this study. Cahen continues that despite this "Turkish appearance, some Armenian authors indeed wished to regard him as a Persarmenian, or even a descendant of the Arsacids." He then wonders about the "Shamanid" roots of these figures, and the "baba"s of Central Asia who were "Islamized." Obviously, these hypotheses shed no light on what he himself calls the "mystery" of this clan. However, where Cahen seems to be in error is his understanding of medieval Near Eastern so-called "nationalism" and ethnicity, in general. Overlooking many cases of ethnic-religious transitions and practices, he finds it "impossible for the Turks to have chosen a non-Turk," someone "who was foreign to their stock" as their leader.⁷⁹

The translator of *Dānishmandname*, Irene Melikoff-Sayer, is convinced of the Armenian roots of the Dānishmandids.⁸⁰ She thinks that the faith of not only this clan but also most converts could not have been totally "pure," as was the case of the Borderlands "Muslims" such as Digenis and the others who will be discussed next. Vryonis offers a very interesting perspective:

Even though in its present form the *Dānishmandname* is a poetic composition of the fourteenth century [it seems to] reflect[s] this instability of the converts during the time of the early Turkish conquests in Asia Minor. Their Islam is rather superficial: they continue to drink wine, have to be forced to go to prayer and, in some cases, betray the towns to besieging Christian forces.⁸¹

Much later, many Janissaries, for example, maintained their old faith, read Christian literature—probably secretly—and managed to spare their families from deportation. One such case is that of the Ottoman imperial architect Sinan, an Armenian from Caesarea, who prevented the deportation of his family to Cyprus.⁸² Conversion was one manner in which the Christian population of the locations in which the Turks spread in Asia Minor was assimilated into Islam. As the churches were weakened by the collapse of secular support and education, hospitals and orphanages were closed and people naturally joined the victorious element for survival and power. In other words, alongside faith, sheer power was another major factor in the Islamic world. “As the religion of militarily victorious and politically dominant group,” writes Vryonis, “there can be no doubt that Islam enjoyed not only enormous economic rewards and political preferment but also enormous moral prestige.” Even though in Islamic society non-Muslims were tolerated, still, Greeks, Armenians, and Syrians were only second-class citizens. During the earlier periods of Turkic penetration, Christians were integrated into Islamic ways of life and played significant roles in commerce, industry, crafts, and so on. Children of intermarriages (with Christian women) were Muslim; the *ghulām* system⁸³ was meant for the children of the Christians, and these neophytes were circumcised and given a Muslim education.⁸⁴

Furthermore, anyone with minimal knowledge of Near Eastern social-political-religious history knows that strictly narrow and typically modern nationalist and otherwise purist criteria are alien to these histories. Ethnicity cannot be taken as a paradigm to understand or explain otherwise extraordinary cases, such as the *Dānishmandids*. Political Islam and the Islamic world superseded and absorbed these criteria. Syncretism was indigenous to the region, as discussed in many contexts in this book, and religious inconformity—often labeled as *heresy*—was another characteristic of the cultures of the Near East and eastern Asia Minor, in particular. Armenians were no exception. Mysticism was another channel, and mutual sympathies developed in

the Armenian and Muslim sects as of the ninth century. The examples of T'ondrakian–Babakian and generally Armenian–Ismā'īlī connections are established facts.

Cahen falls into a true dilemma when faced with the peculiarity of Dānishmandid coins. Before the Seljuks, there were no local coins, except those of the rulers. As he also observes, the first minting of coins happened only under Dānishmandid Gumishtekīn Ghāzī and later on under Seljuk Mas'ūd. The early samples were of copper used locally; silver coins appeared under Kilij Arslān II; and gold emerged in the thirteenth century. There were Greek inscriptions on the coins of Gumishtekīn, his successor Muḥammad, and the latter's brother Inal, Dhū'l-Nūn. This was a very strange initiative for a “purely” Islamic administration. Bypassing this strange phenomenon, Cahen observes that the Seljukid coins later on bore no such inscriptions. He then unexpectedly adds,

What is more remarkable is that the Dānishmandid coins bear representations that are either frankly Christian—the head and shoulders of the Redēemer Christ laying his hand on the sovereign's head—or semi-Christian—St. George smiting the dragon—or less neutral as regards religious but of Byzantine type—the sovereign's portrait or the representation of the lion. Only this last kind appears among the first Seljuks.

Cahen then suggests that the practice may have something to do with “naïve craftsmen,” and finally, he concludes, “I have no suggestions to offer.”⁸⁵

As reiterated many times in this study, the old paradigms of explanation, such as those just referred to and used by Cahen and many other important Near Eastern scholars, have lost relevance and applicability. Several paradigm cases discussed in this book stand as proofs to the fact that Armenians and others easily made conversions into Islam by not only borrowing ethnic attires, so to speak, but also maintaining their ethnic consciousness, and more importantly, a very pragmatic political culture. These elements surfaced in their careers and personalities. Seemingly paradoxical cases such as the “Christian” coins of the Dānishmandids are just relics and specimens of a very vast and unexplored field.

The Dānishmandids established their principality in Cappadocia within the Seljuk Empire of Asia Minor. The political context made them “Turks”; otherwise, their politics between the two empires

was simply pragmatic. In 1097, the first Crusaders appeared near Dānishmandid lands, but neither Gumishtekīn nor Qilij Arslān was affected.⁸⁶ Mar'ash and Melitene (two of the thughūrs of al-Shām) were in the hands of "renegade" Armenians T'at'ul and Gabriel, respectively. According to Ibn al-'Adīm, in 1099/595H, Saint-Gilles was leading expeditions through Cappadocia with the Franks, Christians, and Armenians under his command,⁸⁷ but he could not break into Dānishmandid land. Michael the Syrian speaks of an alliance between the Dānishmandids and the Armenians of Melitene, under the "Greek [Chalcedonian] Gabriel the eunuch." In 1102, when the latter felt that he was under Dānishmandid pressure, he swore (thrice) while giving the city to the Franks, but he only gave his daughter to the prince of Edessa and invited Gumishtekīn Ibn Tilū Dānishmand in. Gumishtekīn allowed his troops to plunder, but spared the population to whom he even brought food, and allowed them to return to their homes. He then appointed an Armenian governor called *Vasilag* or *Basilig* (Basil), a "just and God-fearing man, who helped the city to recover and prosper," as Michael the Syrian says.⁸⁸

A year later, in 1103, according to Ibn al-'Adīm, the Franks made a failed attempt to assist Gabriel in Melitene and Mar'ash.⁸⁹ The two Armenian bishops, Kiprianos of Antioch and Grigoris of Mar'ash, who were in the company of the Franks, were killed, and Bohemund and Richard fell captive. Goī Vasil mediated with the Dānishmandids and freed them by a large ransom. He returned Bohemund to Antioch and adopted him as his son. Richard was ransomed by Alexios and went to Constantinople.⁹⁰ It is very possible that Goī Vasil himself informed Gumishtekīn of the invasion, and helped him intercept the Franks on their way to Melitene.⁹¹ His intention was to place Bohemund in debt, and, indeed, his plan worked for a short while.

Gumishtekīn died in 1105, and was succeeded by his son, Ghāzī, lord of Sivās (1106–1134), who, however, soon lost Melitene to Qilij Arslān. The latter invaded Melitene in 1124 and spread misery in the province. Referring to the next few years, Michael the Syrian says that "like a serpent, wiggling its tail after its head had been severed . . . the evil Greeks, constantly annoyed the Armenians, the Egyptians [Coptic Christians] and the Syrians [Syrian Christians] wherever they found them."⁹² Between 1130 and 1135, Ghāzī allied himself with Cilician Prince Lewon, who had both the Byzantines and the Franks as his enemies, and desperately needed a friendly Cappadocia at his back.⁹³

However, during the early 1130s, the Dānishmand Muḥammad Ibn Ghāzī and his ally Mas'ūd of Konya were involved in raids over Upper Cilicia.⁹⁴ After the death of Ghāzī, his land was divided between his sons. Dhū al-Nūn took Caesarea, Yaghī Siyān Sivās, and 'Ayn al-Dawlah Melitene. The last Dānishmandid ruler was the son of Dhū al-Nūn, Ibrāhīm Ibn Muḥammad II (1165–1173), a son-in-law of Nūr ed-Dīn Zankī, after whose death, the Dānishmandids could not resist the Seljuks of Iconium.

B. Political Converts among Territorial Principalities

1. The "State" of Philaretus

Philaretus (P'ilardos/Bilārdus/Filārdus/Philardos) the Armenian was active in the politics of north al-Shām during the reigns of the Emperor Romanos IV Diogenes and Alp Arslān.⁹⁵ This formidable man intrigued several historians of this period. N. Adontz described him as "one of the most important figures of the century." He was from the Armenian clan of Vrakhmios or Varajnuni, which was involved in the Armenian revolt of Bardas Skleros in 976. According to Adontz, earlier on, Philaretus was in the region between Claudia and Qubbos with the Bēnē Lazarik, who were given lands by the amīr of Melitene. Otherwise, he was a general in the army of Romanos, and to the end, at least nominally, he was recognized as curopalate on the Borderlands in Germanica, around Mar'ash. When the Greeks lost control over the area (after the battle of Manazkert in 1071), Philaretus claimed mastery over the region that he was supposed to defend against the Turks. He expanded into Melitene, the Euphrates, and Antioch, and appointed his associates over various locations.⁹⁶

Michael the Syrian's account of the first appearance of Philaretus sheds light on the circumstances at the time. He says,

About fifty Armenian brigands [whom we can with some certainty consider fugitive militant T'ondrakians], were carrying out raids in the region of Qubbos and Claudia, taking advantage of the presence of the Seljuks. They met a young Armenian man named Philardus from the village of Shirbaz, near Mar'ash and made him their chief because of his tough and robust character. Led by Philardus, the brigands captured a fortress in the region of Cilicia, and a great number of Armenians gathered around them. Gradually Philardus and his associates took over many other Cilician fortresses. When the news reached Constantinople, Romanos invited Philardus and gave him a golden armour and proclaimed him *aughustus*. He then extended

his rule over Țarşūs, Mopsuesta, Mar'ash, Kaysūm, Ra'bān, Edessa and Anazarva, and eventually entered Antioch. Gradually he penetrated further into the valley of Jihun, and then to Melitene. When he realized that he could not resist the Turks, he went to Baghdad and Khurasān and converted to Islam. But before he returned, the Turks had occupied Antioch and the whole area, so he withdrew to Mar'ash and there he died. [It is said that] . . . just before his death he converted back to Christianity.⁹⁷

Among Armenian historians, Matthew of Țdessa is the source of most accounts about "Prince P'ildardos." He first refers to him in the context of the events of the year 1072/1073:

During this time there reigned a lawless and most evil Prince P'ildardos. He was the elder son of the Devil, the evil spirited precursor of the impure Neī [Anti Christ], devilish, horrendous, and immoral. Upon the fall of Diogenes he took control of the province. He was a faithless Christian neither Chalcedonian nor Armenian, and fought the Christians. Even though he acted as a Chalcedonian, he was Armenian on his mother's and father's side. He spent his childhood with his [paternal] uncle at the Monastery of Zorvri-Kozerñ in the province of Hişn Manşūr. But after he left the monastery, he betrayed his faith.⁹⁸

Speaking of his last years, Matthew relates,

When Malikshāh heard of the atrocities of P'ildardos, he lost respect for him. Abandoned by everyone, he decided to abandon Christianity which he had held in corruption. He denied Christ hoping to gain glory from the Persians [Muslims], but gained none. . . . He only gained the pity and hatred of men.⁹⁹

Taking advantage of the circumstances and as a part of his project of something similar to a federal state, Philaretus fought and eliminated several Armenian nobles in the region, including brave T'ōrnik Mamikonean around the year 1073, the son of Muşel, and the son-in-law of Grigor Magistros. Matthew relates that he had a wine flask made out of his victim's skull. He sent the jaw to the Kurdish Amīr of Mayyafāriqīn and burnt the body.¹⁰⁰ Philaretus was also involved in the death of other Armenian princes and leading figures in Upper Mesopotamia.

Becoming the duke of Antioch was also one of his ambitions. In 1060, the city had an Armenian governor, and in 1068, another Armenian called *Xačatur Anec'i* was appointed by Emperor Romanos Diogenes, who supported these Armenians and placed them in

these locations in north Syria.¹⁰¹ Vasak Pahlawuni, the son of Grigor Magistros, was Duke of Antioch in 1071, and in 1078, he was assassinated by two *hasdads*, as just discussed. Soon, Philaretus was said to have been "invited" by the Armenian population of the city, who preferred him over the Turks, and before the end of the year, he was calling himself Duke of Antioch.¹⁰² The role of Philaretus in the murder of Vasak is difficult to establish, but his massacre of seven hundred of the urban militant youth of the city in retaliation was only expected.¹⁰³ By eliminating these anarchistic elements, he was obviously trying to insure his control. Otherwise, he was an enemy of the Pahlawunis, as were these *aḥdāth*. Less than a year later, in 1079, the last Bagratuni King Gagik II, who was still in the region, was assassinated, and Philaretus was said to be a part of the conspiracy. He annexed Edessa, but soon lost Antioch to Sulaymān Ibn Qutulmish.

Philaretus was also notorious for his insistence to have a catholicos on his land. After T'ornik's death, he invited Catholicos Grigor II *Vkayasēr* to reside at Honi. However, "scared of the evil beast," as Matthew put it, Martyrophil advised Philaretus to consecrate Father Sargis instead as "catholicos," and sent a pontifical staff and cross. The fate of the Armenian Catholicosate being closely linked to political circumstances saw radical changes during this decade.¹⁰⁴ Speaking of the early 1080s, Matthew says,

There was great dispute and raw around the Holy See because they elected catholicoi not by God's will but . . . by the power and influence of rulers. The Holy See was divided into four: Vahram [Martyrophil] in Egypt, Theodorus in Honi, Barsel in Ani and Połos in Mar'ash . . . Each of these acted independently, they consecrated bishops, blessed the Holy Chrism [*mu'ron*] . . . This was cause for great mourning in God's church, because the flock of sheep was divided between four shepherds, and the wolves became the guardians of Christ's herd. It was during these times that the sheep went astray and . . . dared to rise against the shepherds and the holy fathers.¹⁰⁵

The position of Philaretus in relation to his own compatriots was at once controversial and peculiar. Rejected by both the church and nobility, which he virtually terrorized, but sought by his compatriots for his power and influence in the region, he created a safe haven for Armenians amid the Arabs, Byzantines, and Turks. He cared little for the faith of the Byzantines or the Armenians, but wanted the Armenian catholicos on his land to serve as the spiritual leaders for his "kingdom." After the death of Philaretus in 1086, Goł Vasil became his

successor, ruling over Mar'ash, Hromkla, Tall Bāshir, Bira, and other locations.¹⁰⁶

After the fall of Antioch to the Crusaders in 1098, the Armenian warlords found themselves in an extremely complicated position. Goł Vasil is just one among many such examples. He was able to maintain his position against the Turks, who had destroyed their own associate Philaretus, but not always was he able to come to terms with the Crusader knights. In the beginning, he assisted them against the Turks. For example, in 1109/503H, he attacked the Shah-i Arman Suqmān al-Quṭbī of Khilāt. However, rivalries within his own circle and the ambivalence of the Crusaders weakened his position. He was betrayed by his brother Bagrat, who hoped to gain some of his brother's lands by siding with the Franks,¹⁰⁷ but was deceived. His adopted son Tlay Vasil succeeded him, but survived only to the year 1115. With the assistance of the Rubenids—his wife also being a Rubenid—the Franks forced him out of his father's land.

At the time, Melitene had become an Armenian city, after the Greeks had expelled the Arabs and the Armenians had settled in their place. Gabriel, a controversial figure and another “renegade” similar to Philaretus and Goł Vasil, was installed there by Philaretus, after the latter's death, and until 1092, he had the protection of the Dānishmandids.¹⁰⁸

2. *Bēnē (or Banū) Boghusaks in Siberek/Sewawerak—1040–1200*

The history of the Bēnē or Banū Boghusaks/Boghousaks in Siberek (*Sewawerak*, meaning black ruins in Armenian), a mainly Armenian town between Diyār Bakr and Samosata, is a variation of the theme of the Armenian–Turkish realpolitik. Michael the Syrian is the main source about this clan:

In the fortress of Sibaberek . . . reigned some Armenians whose father, Boghusak [or Połos, Paul] went to Baghdad at the beginning of the Turkish invasion, he even reached Khurasān and converted to Islam. He obtained a certificate from the grand Sultan of the Turks and from the Caliph [according to which] the place [Sewawerak] became an inheritance [to him] and his descendants. This is the reason why they were all Muslims.¹⁰⁹

Relations between these Muslim–Armenians and their Christian compatriots, and Christians, in general, varied. Michael the Syrian speaks of an Amīr ʿIsā from the clan of the Boghusaks, who was an “evil

man and bitterly detested the Christians." He was on very hostile terms with the Cilician princes Michael and Kostandin and all the Armenians of Gargar, and was a constant threat to them. On their part, these two Armenians perpetually ravaged 'Īsā's land, while the latter abducted Armenians from the region of Gargar. When the Franks showed signs of weakness, 'Īsā gathered some Turks and entered Gargar. Finding nothing worth looting, his men turned on the monasteries, and attacked the convent of Mar Abhai on the Euphrates. They took away the treasures, the chalices, the silver, and the cross.¹¹⁰

The Banū Boghusaks gained the confidence and continuing cooperation of the Turks and Sunnīs, in general. In 1191, Ṣalāḥ ed-Dīn's nephew 'Umar Taqīyy ed-Dīn was given lands in northern Syria, and feeling powerful, he persecuted and robbed both the Christians and the Muslims. He eventually attacked the amīrs of the Banū Boghusaks in Siberek and expelled them from their fortresses. Al-Malik al-Ādil, Ṣalāḥ ed-Dīn's brother was sent to deal with the situation in Ḥarrān, Edessa, Samosata, and Mayyāfāriqīn. The Banū Boghusaks were restored to their position as vassals of the Lord of Amīda, Quṭb ed-Dīn.¹¹¹ Earlier, they had taken part in the Turkish operations, both in the battle of Manazkert and whenever they were called on. This is more or less the information on this Muslim–Armenian clan, about whom the Armenian sources are completely silent, while Arab historians consider them a part of the political landscape of the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

3. *The Armenian Nuṣayrī Ruzzaiks/Ruzzīks in Syria*

During the same decades, there are accounts of the Nuṣayrī-Imāmī Banū Ruzzīk, the clan of the famous Fāṭimid vizier Ṭalā'ī Ibn Ruzzīk (1154/549H–1161/556H). The Ruzzīks were originally from the northern shores of Lake Urmia, but I found a record of their route to Egypt in Ibn al-Qalānīsī's *Damascus Chronicle*.¹¹² In 1112, relates the latter, when Baldwin of Jerusalem realized that he had lost the opportunity to take Tyre (where Ṣāḥir ed-Dīn Atabek had replaced the Fāṭimid governor), he went to 'Akkā. While he was there,

... a man of the Arabs of Ruzzaik came to him from the town with a message that the Damascus caravan had left Boṣrah and was on its way to Egypt with a rich convoy. This man from 'Akkā offered to guide the Franks to it in return for the release of some of his tribesmen who had fallen captive to the Franks. Baldwin accepted the deal and at once set out from 'Akkā in pursuit of the caravan.¹¹³

The caravan was definitely looted, many were killed, and the Franks got away with the money and goods. The Ruzzik clan was known for its fanatical Imāmism and hatred toward the Crusaders as unwelcome “infidels” and invaders. The story and later on the career of vizier Ṭalā’i Ibn Ruzzik confirm this; they also give precious information about the route of the Banū Ruzzik from northwest of Iran to Egypt through al-Shām. After the assassination of vizier Ruzzik Ibn Ṭalā’i, some of the clan fled back to Syria and settled near Salamiyah, a traditionally Nizārī Ismā’īlī stronghold in central Syria.

Notes

1. Salibi, *Syria under Islam*, 187.
2. Ibid., 188.
3. Claude Cahen, *La Syrie du nord, à l'Époque des Croisades et la Principauté Franque d'Antioche* [North Syria at the Time of the Crusaders and the Frankish Principality of Antioch] (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1940), 184–85.
4. Ibid., 186.
5. Ibid., 188.
6. Ibid., 184.
7. Ibid., 181.
8. See Grigor Magistros, “Response to the Letter of the Catholicos of the Syrians,” in *Grigor Magistrosi T’lt’erē* [The Epistles of Grigor Magistros], ed. Kostaneanc’ (Alexandrapol: Gēworg Sanyanc’i Press, 1910), 148–64.
9. Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, vol. III, 162–64.
10. Chabot, the editor of Michael’s *Chronique*, explains that this was the Dayr Sargisiyah al-Abiad. See *Chronique*, vol. III, 162, n # 2.
11. Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, vol. III, 162–63.
12. Ibid., 163–64.
13. Alboyajian, *Patmut’iwn Hay Gatt’akanut’ean*, vol. II, 417.
14. Matt’ēos Uḥayec’i (Matthew of Edessa), *Zamanakagrut’iwn* [Chronicle], trans. H. Bart’ikean (Erevan: Erevan State University Publications, 1991), 230–31. Henceforth: Matthew, *Chronicle*.
15. Ibid., 240–43.
16. Ibid., 242–43.
17. The main source on Gorg is Mxit’ar Aparanec’i; see Ghevont Alishan, *Hay-apatum* (Venice: St. Lazar, 1901), 552; also see Dadoyan, “The Constitution of the Brotherhood of Erzinjān (1280): An Armenization of the *Futuwwa* Reform Project and Literature of ‘Abbāsīd Caliph al-Nāṣir li-dīn Allāh,” *Revue des Études Arméniennes* 29 (2003–2004): 117–65.
18. Alboyajian, *Patmut’iwn Hay Gatt’akanut’ean*, vol. II, 421–22.
19. Cahen, *La Syrie du Nord*, 211.
20. Ibn al-Qalānisi, *Dhayl Ta’riḫ Dimashq*, 58.
21. Cahen, *La Syrie du Nord*, 190.
22. Leo, *Erkeri Jołovacū*, vol. II, 461.
23. Aristakēs Łastivertc’i, *Patmut’iwn*, 91.
24. Ibn al-‘Adim, *Zubdat al-Ḥalab*, vol. II, 147.

25. See Nikolaos Adontz, *Études Armeno-Byzantines* [Armenian-Byzantine Studies] (Lisbon: Gulbenkian Foundation, 1965), 120. *Astatoi* (Latin *hastati*, Armenian *hastats*) means unsteady, unstable, unsettled, wandering. See Liddell and Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 260.
26. Matthew of Edessa, *Chronicle*, 230–31.
27. Seta B. Dadoyan, *The Fatimid Armenians: Cultural and Political Interaction in the Near East* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 70.
28. A. Bridge, *The Crusades* (London: Granada, 1980), 84–85.
29. Cahen, *La Syrie du Nord*, 211.
30. Alboyajian, *Patmut'iwn Hay Galt'akanut'ean*, vol. II, 414.
31. *Ibid.*, 418.
32. *Ibid.*, 419.
33. Cahen, *La Syrie du Nord*, 210.
34. Alboyajian, *Patmut'iwn Hay Galt'akanut'ean*, vol. II, 422–27.
35. *Ibid.*, 423.
36. *Ibid.*
37. *Ibid.*, 423–24.
38. *Ibid.*, 424.
39. Muṣṭafā, “Dukhūl al-Turk,” 349.
40. Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī, *Mir'āt al-Zamān*, Paris Ms. fols. 154b, 159a.
41. *Ibid.*, fols 126b, 127b; Muṣṭafā, “Dukhūl al-Turk,” 350.
42. *Ibid.*, fol. 127b.
43. Matthew, *Chronicle*, 208–9.
44. Ibn al-Jawzī, *Mir'āt al-Zamān*, Paris Ms. fol. 154b.
45. Matthew, *Chronicle*, 214–15.
46. Ibn al-'Adīm, *Zubdat al-Ḥalab*, vol. I, 294.
47. Muṣṭafā, “Dukhūl al-Turk,” 349.
48. See Ibn al-'Adīm, *Zubdat al-Ḥalab*, vol. I, 294–97.
49. Muṣṭafā, “Dukhūl al-Turk,” 343.
50. *Ibid.*, vol. II, 10.
51. *Ibid.*, 31.
52. Muṣṭafā, “Dukhūl al-Turk,” 346.
53. Ibn al-Jawzī, *Mir'āt*, ff. 134f.
54. Muṣṭafā, “Dukhūl al-Turk,” 351.
55. Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī, *Mir'āt*, Paris Ms., Fol. 135b; see Muṣṭafā, “Dukhūl al-Turk,” 352.
56. Al-Maqrīzī, *Muqaffa'*, Salamiyya Ms. f. 242r.
57. Muṣṭafā, “Dukhūl al-Turk,” 362.
58. Ibn al-Jawzī, *Mir'āt*, fol. 135v.
59. *Ibid.*, fol. 134v.
60. *Ibid.*, fol. 148; Muṣṭafā, “Dukhūl al-Turk,” 365.
61. Salibi, *Syria*, 30–131.
62. *Ibid.*, 132.
63. Cahen, “The Turkish Invasion,” in *A History of the Crusades*, 135–76, 151.
64. Ibn al-Athīr, 'Izz ed-Dīn Abū'l-Ḥusn 'Alī Ibn Abī'l-Karam Muḥammad Ibn Muḥammad Ibn 'Abd al-Karīm Ibn 'Abd al-Wahīd al-Shaybānī, *Al-Kāmil fī'l-Ta'rikh* [Complete History], vol. X (Cairo: Idārat al-Ṭibā'ah al-Muniriyyah, 1929–1938), 103.

65. Muştafâ, "Dukhûl al-Turk," 381–82.
66. Cahen, "Atsız Ibn Uvak," *Encyclopedia of Islam- New Ed.*, vol. I, 1960, 750–51.
67. Ibid., 751.
68. Muştafâ, "Dukhûl al-Turk," 386.
69. Ibn al-Qalânîsî, *Dhayl*, 112.
70. Stanley Lane-Poole, *The Mohammedan Dynasties* (Beirut: Khayats, 1966), 156. There were five Dānishmandid rulers: Muḥammad I Gumishtekīn Ibn Tilū Dānishmand (491/1097), Ghāzī Ibn Gumishtekīn (499/1105–529/1134), Muḥammad II Ibn Ghāzī (529/1134), Dhū al-Nūn Ibn Muḥammad II Yaghī (or Ya'qūb) Arslān Ibn Ghāzī (537/1142–561/1165), and Ibrāhīm Ibn Muḥammad II (561/1165–569/1173).
71. *Dānishmand* means *teacher, instructor* in Persian.
72. Matthew, *Chronicle*, 324/325.
73. S. Eremean, "Liparit Zoravari Hajordnerē ew Danishmanian Tohmi Cagman Khndirē" [The Descendants of General Liparit and the Question of the Origin of the Dānishman Family], *Telekagir Hasarakakan Gitut'iwnneri* 8 (1947): 79.
74. Aristakēs Lastivertc'i, *Patmut'iwn* [History] (Tbilisi: Ałanean Press, 1912), 123; Eremean, "The Descendants of Liparit," 66.
75. Eremean, "The Descendants of Liparit," 68.
76. Speros Vryonis Jr., "Manpower in Byzantine and Turkish Societies," in *Studies on Byzantium, Seljuks, and Ottomans*, ed. Speros Vryonis Jr., vol. II (Malibu, CA: Undena Publications, 1981), III, 125–52, 146–47.
77. Ibid., 76.
78. See Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, vol. III, 179–81.
79. Claude Cahen, *Pre-Ottoman Turkey* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1968), 82–83.
80. See Irene Melikoff, *La Geste du Melik Danishmand-Danishmandname* (1960).
81. Vryonis, "Manpower," 151.
82. Ibid.
83. *Ghulām* means *adolescent boy*. These boys were employed as fighters since Sasanian times. After the weakening of the 'Abbāsids, when troops began to be made of *ghilmān* (plural of *ghulām*), the term came to mean *soldier*, usually of a Turkish background. These boys were recruited and paid by a leader, usually a Turk. They were celibate, and there is no evidence about their being eunuchs, but the custom "produced a strongly homosexual sub-culture." Indeed, traces are in Persian poetry.. Kennedy gives the example of Azīz al-Dawlah of Aleppo and his "lover" Tudhun. (See Hugh Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates*. New York: Longman Group, 1986, 206–8).
84. Vryonis Jr., "Nomadization and Islamization in Asia Minor," in *Studies on Byzantium, Seljuks, and Ottomans*, IV, 42–71, 61–62.
85. Cahen, *Pre-Ottoman Turkey*, 169–70.
86. Cahen, *La Syrie du Nord*, 228, 247.
87. Ibn al-'Adīm, *Zubdat al-Ḥalab*, vol. II, 141.
88. Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, vol. III, 188.
89. Ibn al-'Adīm, *Zubdat al-Ḥalab*, vol. II, 145.

90. Matthew, *Chronicle*, 294–95.
91. Eremean, "The Descendants of Liparit," 66.
92. Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, vol. II, 219, 226–27.
93. Cahen, *La Syrie du Nord*, 354.
94. *Ibid.*, 362–63.
95. Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, vol. III, 168.
96. Adontz, *Études*, 174–75.
97. Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, 173.
98. Matthew, *Chronicle*, 222–23.
99. *Ibid.*, 250–51.
100. *Ibid.*, 226–27.
101. Alboyajian, *Patmut'iwn Hay Galt'akanut'ean*, vol. II, 406.
102. *Ibid.*, 411.
103. Matthew, *Chronicle*, 230/231.
104. See Seta B. Dadoyan, *The Armenian Catholicosate from Cilicia to Antelias* (Beirut, 2003).
105. *Ibid.*, 246–47.
106. Alboyajian, *Patmut'iwn Hay Galt'akanut'ean*, vol. II, 417–18.
107. *Ibid.*, 419.
108. *Ibid.*, 414.
109. Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, vol. III, 247–48.
110. *Ibid.*
111. *Ibid.*, 408–9.
112. See Dadoyan, *Fatimid Armenians*, 72.
113. Ibn al-Qalānisi, *Chronicle*, 130.

The Fāṭimid Armenians—Translations of Islam into Power

I. The Armenians in Egypt

As suggested earlier, one of the most important tasks in medieval as well as modern and contemporary history of the Armenians of the medieval Near East is making connections between the different parts of the Armenian habitat or the Armenian World. From the tenth to the twelfth centuries—as discussed in the previous chapters—events in the north and the south, that is *Armīnyah* and the Armenian “phenomena” in al-Shām, Egypt, and further west in North Africa, were naturally related. The phenomenon of Fāṭimid Armenians—as well as of the other Muslim Armenians in the entire region—lasted almost a century and was very much a part of the Armenian and Near Eastern condition at the time. However, it was either totally obscured or simply suspended and/or overlooked by Armenian, Arab, and Western scholarship. Chapter 3 is devoted to this subject based on a previously published monograph.¹

The basic thesis of this chapter is that what was known as the “Armenian Period” in the last century of the Fāṭimid Caliphate in Egypt (1074–1163) was not merely a transitory and isolated episode. It was rather one of the most significant phases of Armenian involvement in the Islamic world and the historic alliance between the Muslims and heterodox Armenians. It distinguished Armenian history both in the Near East and during the Seljuk period, in particular, and became one of the most powerful paradigms of Armenian–Islamic realpolitik.

Armenians often traveled to Palestine and Egypt as students, pilgrims, and merchants. The anti-Chalcedonian position of the Coptic Church encouraged the Armenian clergy to visit and stay at their

monasteries. A certain "Armenian" monastery in Egypt is mentioned in some sources with no further detail.² As of the early years of the fifth century and later on as well, students were sent to the School of Alexandria.³ Around the middle of the seventh century and benefiting from Byzantine to Islamic rule during the transitional period, a certain Grigor or Karkar/Gargar controlled some parts of North Africa. He even issued coins in his name.⁴ Two Armenian *xač'k'ars* (cross-slabs) found in Cairo during the tenth century can be considered indications of some Armenian presence there.⁵

Earlier, during the early Islamic invasions into Egypt, there were about 150 Armenian military slaves in the troops and similar to all Christians, they also were called *rūmīs*.⁶ This is the background, for example, of Vardan or Wardān al-Rūmī al-Armanī, who was a *mawlā*, a freedman, and a flag-bearer (*hāmīl liwā'*) of 'Amr Ibn al-Āṣ.⁷ Wardān fought in the battles of Alexandria (640–641) and took part in the founding of the city of Fuṣṭāṭ (or old Cairo). He knew Greek and was said to have saved his master from a certain death, when the latter fell into the hands of the Greeks in Alexandria.⁸ He is believed to have built the palace of Dār al-Nehās (Copper House) in Fuṣṭāṭ and a market that was called *Sūq Wardān*.⁹ He died in a battle with the Byzantine armies at Borolles around 673/53H.¹⁰ During the ninth century (as discussed in Volume One), al-amīr 'Alī Ibn Yaḥyā al-Armanī, in turn a freed *mamlūk*, served twice as the 'Abbāsīd governor of Egypt (in 841/227H and in 849/235H). Ibn Taghri Birdī speaks of this important figure in detail, his appointment as the governor of *Armīnyah* by caliph al-Mutawakkil, his wars with the Greeks, and his death in an ambush near Mayyāfāriqīn in 863/249H.¹¹

From the first years of Fāṭimid rule in Egypt, Jawhar al-Rūmī also is thought to have been of Armenian descent. He was a freedman of the Fāṭimids and was also known as *al-Saqḷabī*, *al-Siqillī* (meaning Sicilian), and *al-Rūmī* with reference to his Christian background.¹² He was the personal secretary and assistant of the Fāṭimid caliphs al-Manṣūr (946/335–953/341H) and al-Mu'izz (953/341H–975/364–365H), and became a general in the latter's army; hence, his other epithet *al-qā'id* (leader, general).¹³ The background of Jawhar in Sicily and his style in administration led some to consider him of Paulician–Armenian extraction. Sicily was one of the places where the Byzantines regularly sent Armenian heretics.¹⁴

Jawhar played an important role in the pacification of West Africa. In 969, he was sent by caliph al-Mu'izz li-Dīn Allāh to Egypt. Within a few

years, he founded *al-Qāhirah* or Cairo just north of Fuṣṭāṭ and achieved a “white conquest” of mainly Sunni-Shāfiʿi and Coptic Egypt.¹⁵ He also laid the foundations of the Mosque of al-Azhar for “the dissemination of Ismāʿīlī doctrines.”¹⁶ In a parallel fashion, he ordered the construction of the church and the monastery of St. George of al-Khandaq in the southern suburbs of modern Cairo or Miṣr al-Qadimah.¹⁷ It is said that he was buried in the cemetery of the Church of St. George of al-Khandaq as an indication of his loyalty to his original faith. Similar to the Fāṭimids (and Armenian sectarians), Jawhar took astrology very seriously. The locations of al-Qāhirah and al-Azhar, for example, were decided based on his consultations with astrologers.¹⁸ Always trying to maintain a balance in a multireligious society and as an officer of a Fāṭimid-Ismāʿīlī state, Jawhar introduced Shiʿi peculiarities into the *ādhān* (such as “come to the excellent work”) and forbade “the black livery of the ʿAbbāsids . . . and instructed the *khaṭībs*¹⁹ [preachers] to wear white vestments.”²⁰ White was the color of the Fāṭimids. He succeeded in controlling the famine and epidemics in Egypt, played a key role in putting down a Qarmāṭi uprising in Syria, and extended Fāṭimid rule over the Ḥijāz in the Arabian Peninsula.²¹ Despite these achievements, after his arrival to Egypt in 974, caliph al-Muʿizz replaced him with Yūsuf Ibn Killas, a Jew (d. 980/370H).²² During the persecutions of the Christians by Caliph al-Ḥākim in 1010–1011/401–402H, Jawhar’s entire family was slaughtered.²³

The Armenian period in Fāṭimid Egypt had another significant and hitherto undiscovered peculiarity. This was the simultaneous involvement of both the Armenian establishment and the heterodox Muslim Armenians there. The arrival of Badr al-Jamālī in Dumyāt (Damietta) at the end of the year 1073/466H was the beginning of Muslim Armenian political involvement in Fāṭimid Egypt; and the assassination of the last and sixth (or seventh) Armenian vizier, Ruzzīk Ibn Ṭalāʾī, in 1163/455H marked its end. Were it not for the “orthodox” interval of Bahrām’s two-year vizierate, his blatant enmity toward the Muslims, abuse of power, and the bloody aftermath, it would have been harder to trace and compare two opposed levels/styles of Armenian interaction with Islam.

The rise of Badr, a powerful figure, to the highest position in the Fāṭimid administration encouraged the massive inflow of all sorts of Armenians from the north and the formation of a community of almost a hundred thousand. In addition to the few thousand Muslim Armenians who Badr brought with him from Syria, other Armenians also seem to have enrolled in his private troops, as well as in the administration

and army. According to Gaston Wiet, the defense of Egypt was entrusted mainly to the Armenians for almost a century.²⁴

II. The Involvement of the Pro-Byzantine Armenian Institutions in Egypt

A. Catholicos Grigor II Vkasēs (or Martyrophil) Pahlawuni

As mentioned, the visit of Catholicos Grigor II Martyrophil (son of Grigor Magistros Pahlawuni) in 1075 marked the beginning of the involvement of the Armenian establishment in Fāṭimid Egypt, and the death of vizier Bahrām in 1140 indicated its end. In addition to “orthodox” Armenian troops and lesser figures, three members of the pro-Byzantine Pahlawuni House were directly involved: Catholicos Martyrophil, his nephew and a grandson of Magistros Vahram, or Bahrām (in Arabic transliteration), the vizier and personal advisor of Caliph al-Ḥāfiẓ (1130–1149) in 1135–1137; Bishop Grigoris appointed by Martyrophil as “catholicos” or pontiff over the Armenian community in Egypt.

As narrated by Matthew, an admirer of the early fathers, Martyrophil always wanted to visit the great monasteries of the Sinai, but as we follow the circumstances of this visit and another one later on, including events that followed and the military involvement of the Pahlawunis, it seems that the Catholicos was not undertaking a mere pilgrimage. One of his major concerns, as will be demonstrated next, was the organization and control of the immigrant Armenian communities through the establishment of a see.

The real motives of Martyrophil are to be sought in events in the north, that is, in Armenia. Before his Mediterranean journey, he had sent a personal representative, Bishop Petros Islantac’i (or Icelandic), to Crimea, Poland, and Transylvania.²⁵ The undeclared objective was to inspect the heterodox communities in these locations. The Armenian Paulicians or the Bogomils and other heterodox factions had settled (by Byzantium) in many parts of Europe.²⁶

Armenian heterodox and militant factions were already active in al-Shām and Palestine, as discussed in Chapter 2. The arrival and rise of someone such as Badr al-Jamālī with thousands of Muslim Armenians in Egypt caused the rapid immigration of almost thirty thousand Armenians from the north, as confirmed by almost all medieval Arab sources. In north al-Shām Philaretus and his associates controlled large territories inhabited mostly by Armenians and previously under the

control of Pahlawunis (as Byzantine magistrates).²⁷ For a while, before his ordination, Martyrophil was supposed to be the successor of his father, Grigor Pahlawuni, the Byzantine Magistros over Mesopotamia. Developments in the region and the arrival of the Turks probably made this office superfluous. Due to being a catholicos as well, he was still very much involved in Armenian politics. Martyrophil's first Egyptian visit and the ordination of his nephew, as Catholicos Grigoris of the Armenians of Egypt, are recorded in most medieval Arab histories of Egypt. In Armenian history, we have only the following paragraph in the *Chronicle* of Matthew of Edessa:

In the year 523 of the Armenian era [March 3 1074–March 2 1075] *Tēr* [Lord] Grigoris traveled to Constantinople, from there [he went] to Rome. He then arrived in Egypt, where he visited the monasteries of the early fathers and fulfilled all his heart's desires. There he established a Holy See and restored all the canons [*karg*] of the Holy Church. The king of Egypt [caliph al-Mustansir bi'llāh, 1035–1094] honored Lord Grigoris greatly far better than by the king of the *horoms* [Byzantine emperor Michael 1071–1078]. At this time many people [*zork'*], about thirty thousand²⁸ gathered in Egypt. After a while, Lord Grigoris ordained his nephew [sister's son], Lord Grigor as catholicos and returned to Armenia, where his mother was still alive.²⁹

The term *zork'* ordinarily means armies, but in this context, it means multitudes. For example, in the Bible we read, “multitudes of [angels] of heavens” [*amenayn zork' erknic'*] or the “multitudes of devils” [*zoruc'n satanayi*]. *Martyrophil* refers to the numbers of the Armenians who arrived in Egypt. As mentioned earlier, Arab sources also confirm that about thirty thousand Armenians lived in Fātimid Egypt at the time and by the end of the century, their number rose to a hundred thousand. According to Alishan, in response to “repeated” pleas by Caliph al-Mustansir to remain in Egypt, Martyrophil replied that he could not comply with the king's wish, because “in the absence of a community there his office in Egypt would be vacuous [*unayn*].” Always according to Alishan, the caliph swore to “fill the world [or Egypt] with the Armenian nation, a promise that he kept and their numbers were greatly multiplied.”³⁰

Martyrophil's return from Egypt in the late 1070s coincided with the assassination of his brother Vasak, the Byzantine Duke of Antioch, and the arrival of Philaretus in the city as its governor. Within the same year, in 1078/1079, Gagik II, the last Bagratuni King, was murdered

in a plot to which Philaretus was said to have contributed. Armenians everywhere looked at Gagik as their king in exile. At the time, the only sovereign Armenian land in the region was that of Philaretus the renegade, whose sole objective was to legitimize his status as the only Armenian ruler within the Seljuk world. Philaretus also wanted to give his "state" a spiritual centrality and invited Martyrophil to return to his see, but the latter refused and temporarily settled in Mudarras, in Camndaw.³¹ The alliances of Philaretus with the Kurds, Turks, and Arabs put him in a very peculiar position as far as the church was concerned. As Armenian communities spread farther from each other and communications between various locations under rival powers were disrupted, new sees were established. According to Ōrmanian, at the time, on the mainland and outside, there were eight patriarchs who called themselves *catholicoi* or pontiffs, and acted independently.³²

At the political level, Martyrophil took a very important step that initiated a basic turn of events in Egypt. After his return from Egypt, and the division of the Catholicosial See into four and then six, he was said to have gathered the remaining Armenian nobles in Sasun in the province of Taron. T'uršean believes that this meeting must have taken place in 1090. Following this meeting Martyrophil put together a force of about 20,000 men to be dispatched to the south under the command of his sister's sons, Vasak (Basak in Arab sources) and his brother, whom he renamed after himself as *Vahram* (future vizier Bahrām). The latter had two more brothers, Grigor (or Catholicos Grigoris of Egypt) and Prince Apirat, the father of Šnorhali.³³ Events at the end of the eleventh century and details about the career of Vahram/Bahrām in al-Shām, Palestine, and Egypt make this account acceptable.

It seems, therefore, that in addition to establishing a see in Egypt, Martyrophil also sent military reinforcements to support the Apostolic Armenians there and balance/control the Muslim Armenians who were in positions of power. The exact date of the arrival of this force is not clear. Medieval Armenian sources are silent about the whole episode. The only clue is found in an autobiographical poem by Nersēs Šnorhali, where both the objectives and the nature of Vahram's Egyptian crusade are briefly revealed. It was by Martyrophil's deliberation and blessing, said Nersēs Šnorhali, that the two brothers, Vahram and Vasak "waged wars against [some] races/factions [in Egypt] and reigned as conquerors over the land of their opponents."³⁴ These "opponents" or enemies could be the Muslims, but why would the Armenians send

troops to Egypt to fight Muslims? They were already surrounded by Muslims in Upper Mesopotamia. There is a greater probability that these opponents were the heterodox and Muslim Armenians, who less than two decades after having been persecuted by Grigor Magistros in 1054–1057, now prospered in Egypt in 1074. This is an almost shocking hypothesis—one can surmise—about Armenian politics in Egypt at the time. However, as we go over Armenian-related events during the subsequent periods in Palestine, al-Shām, and Egypt itself, they seem to make perfect sense.

B. Vizier Bahrām al-Armanī and Caliph al-Ḥāfiẓ—an Aborted “Crusade”

The vizierate of Bahrām, the only Christian among the seven Armenian viziers, was a highly uncommon and controversial case. He was born in Tall Bāshir between the Taurus and the Euphrates, on the river Sājūr (a tributary of the Euphrates in the northeast of Aleppo).³⁵ After the Seljuk occupation of much of Cappadocia, many Armenians settled there.³⁶ Between 1075 and 1078/1079, Tall Bāshir was within the state of Philaretus, and the Pahlawunis were not welcome there. Ibn Muyassar has an ambiguous explanation about the circumstances that drove Vahram from Tall Bāshir:

He who ruled the Armenians died and Bahrām was the worthiest to take his place, but a group of Armenians united against him . . . and appointed another person. Bahrām left Tall Bāshir angered and came to Cairo’ during early 1130s.³⁷

The ambiguity in Ibn Muyassar’s report can be explained by a passage in the famous letter of caliph al-Ḥāfiẓ to King Roger II of Sicily (after the overthrow of Bahrām in 1137). This letter as well as three other letters by the caliph are the source of most of what we know about Bahrām. They are preserved in al-Qalqashandī’s *Ṣubḥ al-Aʿshā*,³⁸ and I will refer to them in detail a little later in this chapter.

In Crusader sources, Bahrām is referred to as “le seigneur Vahram” or “le seigneur des Armeniens,” and in Arab sources, he is “muqaddam al-arman” or the leader of the Armenians.³⁹ It seems that after leaving, or being expelled from Tall Bāshir, Bahrām moved to the south at the head of an Armenian force and was involved in the Frankish–Muslim conflict. Most probably, based on the letters of al-Ḥāfiẓ, Ibn Muyassar says,

When Bahrām established himself in the vizierate" [around 1135] he asked al-Ḥāfiẓ to be given permission to invite his brothers and associates [*jamā'atuhu*], and he was allowed to do so. He brought them from Tall Bāshir and the land of the Armenians until their number in Egypt reached thirty thousand. They confiscated the rights of the Muslims and inflicted great injustice upon them.⁴⁰

The sharp contrast in conduct and mentality between the associates of Bahrām and the other Armenians who had gathered in Egypt with Badr's rise to power in 1074 justifies the remark by al-Ḥāfiẓ about the "devilish plans" that Bahrām was involved in. The troops sent later on by Martyrophil and the nobles were naturally of an orthodox background. M. Canard was one of the few historians who noticed a discrepancy between dates and reports and wrote without further elaboration that "obscure events" must have followed the death of Philaretus, which he places five to six years later in 1092 and before the arrival of Bahrām in Egypt.⁴¹

Al-Ḥāfiẓ made no reference to the events in the north, but spoke of secret messages written in Armenian between Bahrām and north Syria. He also does not make a connection between Bahrām and Martyrophil and the latter's powerful position in the Armenian world. He believes that those whom Bahrām contacted were military men who gradually moved to the south until their number reached twenty thousand. Some were mounted, whereas others were foot soldiers. Two sons of Bahrām's brother were also among these arrivals.⁴² Michael the Syrian has a very simple and general account of the episode of Bahrām:

There were many Armenians in Egypt who had arrived there after expanding in Cilicia and Syria, when Emperor Basil gave them Capadocia in exchange for Armenia. They multiplied in Egypt, had a catholicos and bishops. The Catholicos [Martyrophil] had a brother called Bahrām and it was this Bahrām who became the chief of the Armenians.⁴³

The passage just cited referred to the events of the later decades of the eleventh century and not to Bahrām's vizierate much later. When early in the year 1135/529H, Prince Ḥasan, one of the sons of caliph al-Ḥāfiẓ, asked Bahrām to come from al-Gharbiyah to his assistance, he entered Cairo with his private army of Apostolic Armenians to put an end to the clashes between the Turkmens and the Juyūshiyah troops. According to Canard, it was around 1090/403H that Bahrām had

arrived in Egypt at the head of this Armenian army, gathered by his uncle Martyrophil and other nobles earlier on in the north.⁴⁴ This is also the “force” to which both Šnorhali and Michael the Syrian referred.

Canard considered Bahrām’s success a victory not for the Fāṭimid monarchy but another “victoire arménienne,”⁴⁵ similar to the successes of Badr (in 1074) and Ṭalā’ī Ibn Ruzzīk (in 1054). Similar to many other historians, Canard also missed the radical differences between these “Armenian victories.” Badr’s Armenians came with a deliberate plan to restore the caliphate—surely for their own political gains as well—and, indeed, they brought peace to Egypt and extended the life of a terminally ill dynasty by a century. Bahrām’s anti-Muslim policies overshadowed his so-called victory and instigated unprecedented violence against the Armenians. The Muslims about whom al-Ḥāfiẓ and other historians spoke possibly also included and targeted the Muslim Armenians as well, the traditional enemies of the Armenian nobility and the church.

There is another detail also that should not escape attention. When Martyrophil arrived in Egypt, Badr’s Armenians were already there. However, when asked by the caliph to establish his see in Cairo, he found “no community,” thus totally ignoring these Armenians. The ordination of his nephew as “catholicos” served as an insurance and encouragement for his “orthodox” immigrants into Egypt, and indeed many more came. On the other hand, despite their Islam, Badr, the Jamālīs, the Ruzzīks, and all other figures of Armenian descent in the Fāṭimid army and administration were known for their preferential treatment of their compatriots. They surrounded themselves with them, placed them in positions of power, confiscated Coptic churches, and gave them to the Christian Armenians. However, they seem to have managed to maintain a balance, and no hostility was ever recorded against the Armenian community, to the term of Bahrām.

There is another obscure point: If, as reported in Arab histories, by the time of Bahrām’s vizierate, there were almost one hundred thousand Armenians and more than thirty Armenian churches and monasteries in Cairo and major cities, why would the followers and associates of Bahrām build private chapels/churches on every street? Surely, they were not naïve enough to believe that they could “change Egypt’s Muslim character,” as caliph al-Ḥāfiẓ wrote in his first reply to Bahrām’s plea from al-Shām.⁴⁶ The only explanation is that the so-called Muslims who the followers of Bahrām were antagonizing and trying to convert may have been heterodox and Muslim Armenians.

Obviously, Bahrām's crusade was unacceptable, as was his vizierate. Sunnī Muslims who considered even the caliph an imposter and a dissident (*rāfiḍ*) saw an opportunity to intervene. Ruḍwān Ibn Walakhshī, the Sunnī governor of al-Gharbiyah and by encouragement from the caliph himself, intervened to defend the "Muslims" whom Bahrām and his men were persecuting. In his letter to Roger II of Sicily, al-Ḥāfiẓ wrote that public opposition formed a homogeneous front and that "Bahrām and his associates became conspicuous as a dark stain on a clear surface, yet [they were a small minority] as a drop in the waters of the ocean."⁴⁷ Could the "stain" possibly refer to Bahrām's partisans as opposed to the rest of the Armenian community in Egypt? Indeed, during the anti-Armenian atrocities, the desecration of the tomb of Bahrām's brother, Catholicos Grigoris, and the murder of his brother Basak, the governor of Qūs, showed that the members of Bahrām's immediate family were the targets.

Al-Ḥāfiẓ, who was considered a usurper of the caliphal position and was suspicious of everyone, tried to keep his Christian vizier.⁴⁸ He modified some customs, such as entering the mosque on Friday with the chief Qāḍī (judge). He also took over the management of the Ismā'īlī *da'wah* (mission, propaganda), as was the custom before Badr al-Jamālī (who changed it in his favor).⁴⁹ The commonly held view that the appointment of a Christian as vizier triggered popular uprisings against Bahrām has no foundation. The Muslim theologians found no problem in the appointment of a Christian as executive vizier (*wazīr al-tanfīdh*), but refused to accept him as a delegate of the caliph-imām (*wazīr al-tafwīd*). In other words, there seems to have been no objection to the creed of the vizier as long as his duties were strictly administrative. However, as Mājid says, "Bahrām fanatically adhered to his Armenian background" and restricted his confidence only to his compatriots.⁵⁰

It was Bahrām's blunt imposition of his clan and men in the administration and the general public as well as his overtly anti-Muslim disposition that triggered anti-Armenian acts from 1137 to 1140. It has been suggested that the episode was also an "anti-Christian spasm." Rivalries between the Christian vizier and Sunnī Ruḍwān Ibn Walakhshī had other causes. Y. Lev says that "mocking al-Ḥāfiẓ's attempts to legitimize his claim to the imamate, Ruḍwān even sought to raise one of the sons of the caliph to the throne." However, the chief *dā'i* (missionary) "expounded the standard Ismā'īlī doctrine that one

of the necessary attributes of an imām is the designation decree (*naṣṣ*) conferred upon the future imām by the imām-father."⁵¹

Personally, al-Ḥāfiẓ did not seem to entertain anti-Christian feelings, and the contrary could be shown to be true. Between the years 1130 and 1136, four decrees were issued by the Fāṭimid court on behalf of the monks of Mount Sinai. The first two were by al-Ḥāfiẓ⁵² but the third and the fourth (1135, 1136) were issued by Bahrām and not the caliph, as was customary.⁵³ All of them were in favor of the monks and warned all those who harassed them.

Bahrām's vizierial titles appeared as follows: "Most Excellent Lord, Commander of the Armies, Sword of Islam, Helper of the Imām, Succour of Mankind, Abū'l-Muẓaffar Bahrām al-Ḥāfiẓī."⁵⁴ Another indication of the tolerance and sympathy of al-Ḥāfiẓ toward the Christians was his friendship with the anonymous Armenian Patriarch of Itfih, who visited the palace to give the caliph lectures until the latter's death in 1149.⁵⁵ In 1172/568H, after the rise of the Ayyūbids, the patriarch left Egypt carrying what he could of the church treasures⁵⁶ and established the monastery and the Church of St. Sargis just outside Jerusalem, where he spent the rest of his life.⁵⁷

One of the most intriguing aspects of Bahrām's episode is his Crusader connection and role in Crusader plans to expand into Fāṭimid territories. The Armenian-Crusader alliance had started even before they entered al-Shām. Much later, during the Cilician period, this alliance remained constant despite occasional disruptions due to the greed and arrogance of the knights. Al-Ḥāfiẓ had good reason to suspect Bahrām's involvement in these projects. It was on his encouragement and with his support that the fanatical Ibn Walakshī came to Cairo and disposed of Bahrām and his men. The caliph even supported this man in inciting the mob and the army against Bahrām and his Armenian associates. However, with his typical idiosyncratic manner, in the same letter where he accused Bahrām of several misdoings, the caliph informed Roger II that he had already granted royal pardon to Bahrām and insurances for his life and property to return to Egypt.

Adding the epithet *al-naṣrānī* (the Christian) to Bahrām's name and "defender of Islam" to Ruḍwān's, al-Qalqashandī says that cunningly and deceitfully Bahrām took on the appearance of having repented for his disloyalty and demonstrated obedience to the caliph. He claimed to have a wish to withdraw from the world and to retire into a monastery in order to devote himself to worship.⁵⁸ In compliance with Bahrām's

desire to return, the caliph proposed two alternatives: The first was to remain in public service but with a very small personal guard, and the other was to withdraw into a monastery of his choice and be given the ownership of both the monastery and its surrounding. If both alternatives failed to meet Bahrām's approval, the caliph warned him of terrible consequences that would inevitably follow, because, as he said, what all the Muslims intend and will do "is a religious action that no secular power can delay or prevent." He urged Bahrām to reflect on the matter and to inform him of his decision.⁵⁹

Still in Syria, Bahrām contacted Roger II, who sent another letter of mediation asking for insurances for himself and his brothers' safety in Egypt. In his second letter, al-Ḥāfiẓ promised safety (*amān*) to Basīl (Vasil) and Zarqa (Šahan) and Vahram, their nephew (son of another brother). As Bahrām's associates, they were given assurances to either remain in Egypt as earlier, or depart to their native land, should they wish to do so.⁶⁰

Bahrām returned, but he broke his promise and sought an encounter with his opponents. Ibn Walakhshī besieged the capital and when Bahrām's men met them, these soldiers raised pages of the Qur'ān on their spears, and the Muslims in Bahrām's troops joined the enemy camp. The caliph advised him to leave for Qūs where his brother Basak was the governor. Ibn Walakhshī entered Cairo as soon as Bahrām left and was immediately proclaimed vizier with an additional title of al-Malik al-Afḍal.⁶¹ However, his two-year term in office (1137–1139) was riddled by constant conflicts with the caliph and ended in his imprisonment. The caliph never intended to keep him anyway. He continued without a vizier to the end of his life.

When Bahrām arrived in Qūs with his Armenian troops, or what was left of them, he found his brother's mutilated body tied to a dog's carcass and thrown in the rubbish. Meanwhile, in Cairo, the tomb of his other brother, Catholicos Grigoris in the Church of al-Zuhri, was desecrated. The Catholicos Anania was massacred along with other priests and civilians, and the churches and houses of Armenians in the Ḥusayniyah District of Cairo were pillaged and burnt. In Qūs, Bahrām retaliated violently and fled to the White Monastery near Aswān. He was soon surrounded by his enemies and after negotiations, he was allowed to leave to Cairo with his men, many of whom went back to the north. Several versions are available about the time that Bahrām

spent at the White Monastery and his return to Cairo as the personal advisor of the caliph at the palace (where he died in 1140/535H).

Caliph al-Ḥāfiz, one of the most cunning and enigmatic figures in Fāṭimid history, declared three days of mourning and led the funeral procession in tears. Bahrām was buried at the Monastery of al-Khandaq.⁶² His death brought the involvement of the Armenian establishment in Fāṭimid Egypt to a dramatic end. Between the end of hostilities in 1140/535H and the year 1186/582H (when four Armenian priests were sent there by Prince Lewon of Cilicia to reclaim the churches of al-Zuhri and al-Bustān), we hear of no official Armenian contacts with Egypt.⁶³ Both these churches and the monasteries of al-Khandaq and al-Abyaḍ, in particular, belonged to the Armenian community, according to a list of thirty churches by Tēr Mik'aēlean.⁶⁴ The last Cilician monarch, Lewon V spent some time there as hostage of the Mamlūks from 1375 to 1382, before finally moving to Europe.

III. Muslim Armenian Vizierial Rule, 1074–1163

Six Muslim Armenian viziers, ruling a total of almost six decades, constituted the highlights of the “Armenian period” in Fāṭimid Egypt. The three Jamālīs, Badr, al-Afḍal, and Kutayfāt, formed a miniature dynasty. The *haybah* (awe-inspiring image) of Badr was very briefly renewed in vizier Yānis, a *mamlūk* of al-Afḍal. Less than fifteen years after Bahrām’s death, in 1154, the Ruzzīks or the Banū Ruzzīk, Ṭalā’ī, his son Ruzzīk, and other members of their clan took over for seven years, from 1154 to the end of 1162. Had everything gone according to Ṭalā’ī’s plans and circumstances permitted, his grandson (the son of his daughter married to the last Fāṭimid Caliph al-‘Ādid) would have reached the caliphate, similar to Badr’s grandson (daughter’s son) al-Musta’li in 1094. Hitti summarizes the beginning of the Armenian Period:

Because of the perpetual wars between the Turkish, Berber and Sudanese battalions, the Caliph al-Mustanṣir completely lost control over the situation. Drought, famine and epidemics drained the economic and social resources of Egypt. In 1073 the vacillating caliph summoned the Armenian Badr al-Jamālī, a former slave, from his military governorship of ‘Akkā to act as vizier and commander in chief. The new *Amīr al-Juyūsh* [army commander] took command with such vigor that he brought order out of apparent chaos and gave the Fāṭimid regime a new lease on life. But . . . neither Badr’s efforts nor those of his son and successor, al-Malik al-Afḍal . . . could check the tide of decline.⁶⁵

A. A Hypothesis about the Beginnings of Badr in Aleppo: Al-Amīr ‘Azīz al-Dawlah

With the exception of two lines in the *Chronicle* of Matthew of Edessa, Armenian sources are completely silent about “*amirčos*” (*Amīr al-Juyūsh*), as he puts it. Abū’l-Najm Badr Ibn ‘Abdallāh al-Jamālī al-Mustansiri (1074/466H–1094/467H), better known as Amīr al-Juyūsh, is one of the most famous figures of the last century of the Fāṭimid Caliphate. He was a *mamlūk* of al-Qāḍī Jamāl al-Dawlah Ibn Ḥammār (‘Ammār) of Tripoli, hence his epithet al-Jamālī. Otherwise, nothing is known about Badr’s earlier life in Syria, before his appointment as the Fāṭimid military governor of Damascus in 1063/455H.

However, in Ibn al-‘Adīm’s history of Aleppo, we find a youth called Abū’l-Najm (or Abū Najm) Badr, who was an Armenian *ghulām* of the Fāṭimid governor of Aleppo, the Armenian ‘Azīz al-Dawlah Abū Shujā’ Fātik al-Wahīdī Ibn ‘Abdallāh al-Rūmī. The personality and career of ‘Azīz al-Dawlah are symbolic of not only Muslim Armenian involvement in al-Shām but also the Armenian Period half a century later in Fāṭimid history. “He was one of the most important Fāṭimid governors of Aleppo,” says Ibn al-Qalānisi.⁶⁶ During his brief career of six years (1016/407H–1022/413H), ‘Azīz started a Borderlands principality—almost anticipating the careers of Philaretus and other Muslim Armenians at the time. According to Ibn al-‘Adīm, the citadel of Aleppo (*al-Qal‘ah*) was submitted to ‘Azīz al-Dawlah in Ramaḍān of 1016/407H, and Caliph al-Ḥākim officially proclaimed him *wālī* (governor) over the city and its province.⁶⁷ He was an Armenian *ghulām* of Mangutakīn al-‘Azīzī, the Fāṭimid governor of Damascus during the reign of al-Ḥākim. Al-Maqrizī described him as an “intelligent and pious Armenian.”⁶⁸

‘Azīz al-Dawlah is relevant to our subject in three respects: first as an indication to Muslim–Armenian presence in al-Shām during the eleventh century; second, due to his monopoly of power and the project of a “frontiers land,” so to speak, of his own between the Byzantine and Islamic/Fāṭimid worlds; and third, for the peculiarity of his religious–cultural loyalties, in other words, his syncretism. Even though the Islam and piety of ‘Azīz were granted by all, his career and friendships were controversial. In the same context where Ibn al-‘Adīm describes the virtues and ceremonial arrival of ‘Azīz in Aleppo, as though to support his high praise, he mentions the two allegorical works that the famous poet and atheist Abū’l-‘Alā’ al-Ma‘arrī dedicated to him (*Risālat al-Šāhil wa’l-Shāhij* and *Kitāb al-Qā’if*). It seems that

Abū'l-'Alā'—himself a controversial genius—was on good terms with this Armenian governor. 'Azīz was also a lover of poetry and wrote some poetry of his own similar to other Muslim–Armenian figures in Fāṭimid Egypt.⁶⁹ 'Azīz must have been an unusual personality to deserve this honor from a man such as Abū'l-'Alā'. These allegories are also very important sources about him and the events in north Syria and Aleppo.⁷⁰

On the extremities of the Fāṭimid Caliphate and in very close proximity with the Greeks, 'Azīz al-Dawlah worked on a separatist project. To inspire confidence in the local Arab populace who lived under the constant threat of Basīl II, he asked Asad al-Dawlah Šāliḥ Ibn Mirdās to bring his mother, al-Rabāb or *Umm Šāliḥ*, to Aleppo only a year after his arrival. He wanted to show the people that he was in alliance with the local Banū Kilāb against the Byzantines whom they despised. Acting as a sovereign, he issued coins and had his name mentioned from the pulpits of mosques. Always according to Ibn al-'Adīm, on the exterior pediment of the Gate of Antioch (*Bāb Anṭākiyah*) on the walls of Aleppo and on the silver chandeliers of the Great Mosque of Aleppo, there were inscriptions bearing his name as "al-Sayyid Amīr al-Umarā' 'Azīz al-Dawlah."⁷¹ When in 1020/411H, a short time before his disappearance, Caliph al-Ḥākim sent troops to the dissident north, 'Azīz resorted to Basil II asking him to come to his rescue. Earlier, in 995/385H, Basil II was in the province of Aleppo, but left when Fāṭimid forces under Mangutakīn approached.⁷²

Basil II had reached Marj al-Dibāj (Chukur Ava near Ayntāb) when news of al-Ḥākim's death reached the north. 'Azīz al-Dawlah annulled the deal with no scruples and allied with the Banū Kilāb against the emperor. The latter withdrew to Manazkert, then populated mostly by Armenians, and occupied it. Scared of the retaliation of the emperor, the population fled to the south. Ibn al-'Adīm called this mass exodus "*jaflat* [flight in fear] of 'Azīz al-Dawlah."⁷³ Many of these Armenians settled in Aleppo. About a decade later, in the context of the events of the year 1030/421H, al-Maqrīzī speaks of a group of two thousand Armenian horsemen who chased some Greeks in the region of Aleppo and confiscated four hundred mules, which they put on sale in Aleppo for two dinārs each.⁷⁴ Usāmah Ibn Munqidh of Shayzar, in turn, speaks of Armenians of different backgrounds in the same locations during the same period.

From 1017 to 1021, the Aleppine principality of 'Azīz al-Dawlah flourished. He controlled the entire province of Aleppo and dismissed

the Fāṭimid officials. He had a private and well-fortified palace built annexed to the Citadel of Aleppo; this building was mentioned many times in subsequent histories.⁷⁵ Caliph al-Ḥākim's sister Sitt al-Mulk, who masterminded her brother's disappearance on February 12, 1021/ Shawwal 411, took control and appointed the Caliph's seventeen-year-old son Abū'l-Ḥasan, whom she had raised in her palace. This youth became Caliph al-Zāhir li-'Izāz Dīn Allāh.⁷⁶ For a while, Sitt al-Mulk or *al-Sayyidah* tolerated the separatist Armenian *wālī* of Aleppo. She even sent him a "robe of honour" (*khil'ah*), which was traditionally granted to "valued members of the caliph's entourage."⁷⁷ However, in the spring of 1022, 'Azīz was the victim of an assassination plot by the initiative of the Fāṭimid court. He was murdered by two of his favorite ghulāms, an Indian called *Tuzūn/Teedhun*, and another known as *Abū'l-Najm Badr*. At the instigation of Badr, the Indian stabbed his master while he was asleep (after a drinking session), and was immediately killed by Abū'l-Najm Badr, also called *Badr al-Kabīr*. Badr is said to be an Armenian ghulām and mamlūk of Mangutakīn.⁷⁸ As a reward, he was granted the title of Wafīyy al-Dawlah wa Amīnuha or the "Loyal and Trustworthy One of the State" and briefly stayed in charge of the citadel. When a Fāṭimid contingent arrived in Aleppo led by Sadīd al-Dawlah 'Alī Ibn Aḥmad al-Ḍayf, he delivered the citadel.⁷⁹ No mention is made about his future career.

To my knowledge, no Armenian other than Abū'l-Najm Badr is mentioned in Syria at that particular time, and an argument for the identity of these two Abū'l-Najm Badrs seems plausible. Badr was in his late eighties when he died in 1094; he must have been born around 1005–1008 and been a ghulām in the 1020s. Furthermore, it is not difficult to trace the seeds of the political personality of the Amīr al-Juyūsh in this ruthless and shrewd youth. It is very possible that this Badr entered the service of another chieftain in Tripoli. In other words, to gain the confidence of Caliph al-Mustanşir, Badr must have had a long and brilliant military track record in Syria. In the early 1060s, he was appointed military governor of al-Shām.

B. The Jamālī House of Fāṭimid Viziers

As far as Arab historians are concerned, Badr's political career started in April 1063/455, when Tāj al-Umarā' al-Muẓaffar Muqaddam al-Juyūsh Sharaf al-Mulk Abū'l-Najm Badr al-Jamālī, a *mamlūk* of al-Qāḍī Jamāl al-Dawlah Ibn Ḥammār ('Ammār), arrived in Damascus

as governor or *wālī* and settled in Mizzah (or Mazzah) near Damascus.⁸⁰ Badr was always known for his loyalty to the Fāṭimids, who were constantly involved in difficult confrontations in Syria. After a little more than a year from his appointment, war broke out between Badr's troops and the aḥdāth of Damascus. He left but after three years, in July of 1066/458H, he was reappointed as the governor of Damascus and the whole of al-Shām with the titles of *Amīr al-Juyūsh* and *Sayf al-Islām*. He resided in *Qaṣr al-Salṭānah* on the plain of Bāb al-Ḥadīd. It seems that his sons also held positions in the Fāṭimid armies. News of his son Sha'bān's death in 'Akkā reached him during this period.⁸¹

1. *Armenian–Turkish Rivalry and the Vizierate of Badr al-Jamālī*

Armenian–Turkish rivalry for power is a very vital aspect of the last century of Fāṭimid history. As long as the Armenians were in power, the caliphate survived, and the Turks and Crusaders were kept out of Egypt. When the last Armenian vizier Ruzzīk was assassinated, the mixed Kurdish–Turkish contenders for power penetrated the administration and put an end to the Fāṭimids. The contrast has often been drawn by historians of the Fāṭimids. To underline the loyalty of Badr to the Fāṭimids and the contrary among Turks, Ibn al-Qalānīsī compared him with the Turkish Nāṣir al-Dawlah Ibn Ḥamdān, the previous governor of Damascus. The latter made several attempts to liquidate Badr using Bedouins and urban paramilitary factions opposed to the Fāṭimids. On his part, Badr executed many of Ibn Ḥamdān's supporters.⁸² In 1068, Ibn Ḥamdān took his operations to Egypt with a group of Turkish chieftains and amīrs with whom he shared great sums of money, which he made Caliph al-Mustanṣir pay him. Eventually, the royal treasury was emptied, and the state was on the verge of a total collapse.⁸³

By 1070, the Seljuks were in Aleppo and forced the predominantly Shī'ite population to declare allegiance to the 'Abbāsids.⁸⁴ The ultimate plan was to occupy Cairo, where their allies were already active. We have already referred to the manipulations in Cairo to keep Badr occupied in Syria. In the presence of the Turks and in the face of opposition to the Fāṭimids, Badr's task was almost impossible. He left *Qaṣr al-Salṭānah*⁸⁵ and established himself in 'Akkā, where he could control the coast up to Sidon and ensure open roads of communication and trade with Egypt.

As related just now, when his troops put a siege on Tyre in 1069/461H, the governor of the city Ibn Abū 'Aqīl asked the assistance

of the Nāwīkīs,⁸⁶ some of whom joined Badr. For a while, Badr had to ease the siege to defend Sidon against an expedition led by another Nāwīkī, Qaralu (a brother of Atsiz). The siege of Tyre was resumed in 1070/462H, this time by the assistance of Ibn Khān, an uncle of the former. Fortified in 'Akkā, Badr led a true resistance against the Turks inland. Four years after Badr left Syria, in 1078/470H, inner Syria fell to Seljuk Tutush.

In Egypt, during the sixteen years between the execution of al-Yāzūrī (1058/450H) and Badr's arrival (in 1074/466H), the rivalries between the Maghribī Kutāma, the Zuwaylah, the Berbers, and the Sicilians caused civil strife and chaos.⁸⁷ The Sudanese military slaves were introduced during the office of Kāfūr al-Ikhshīdī. Caliph al-Ḥākim deployed these black battalions against the Sunnī population of Fustaṭ.⁸⁸ In addition, the support that al-Mustanṣir's Sudanese mother provided to the Sudanese granted them a political role. In 1066/459H, the war had already reached its climax. Led by Nāṣir al-Dawlah Ibn Ḥamdān, the rebels gained control over the capital and drove the Sudanese troops to al-Ṣā'īd, and clashes spread to the provinces. In the capital, al-Mustanṣir was incapacitated. After a short period out of Cairo, Ḥamdānīd Nāṣir al-Dawlah, "the victorious commander of the Turks," was virtually in control of Egypt. Al-Mustanṣir was not only deprived of all power but also denied legitimacy. Preparations were made to declare Turkish allegiance to the 'Abbāsids and in 1070, by orders of Nāṣir al-Dawlah, the name of the 'Abbāsīd caliph, al-Qā'im (1031/422H–1075/467H) was pronounced in the Friday khutbah in the mosques of Alexandria.⁸⁹

War, ravaging of the country by the Turkish troops,⁹⁰ and drought (because of the low level of the Nile from 1065 to 1072) caused severe economic crisis, epidemics, and famine. In the year 1069/461H, pillaging and destruction reached the famous Fāṭimid libraries.⁹¹ Nāṣir al-Dawlah himself was the victim of a plot by his own men, and another Turkish chieftain Ildekīz took over. Under the pretext of protecting the caliph, he asked for more financial rewards. By that time, the treasury and the royal palace were emptied. The caliph lived alone surviving on a small daily ration of bread that a woman brought him.

These were the circumstances that led Caliph al-Mustanṣir to summon Badr from 'Akkā. He had no choice but to accept the latter's condition to bring in troops of his own choice into Egypt.⁹² Sometime, in December 1073/465H, Badr sailed on a stormy sea from 'Akkā with

one hundred ships—as told—loaded with mostly Armenian warriors, estimated to be between two and seven thousand men.⁹³ These troops became the *juyūshiyah* forces named after Badr the *amīr al-juyūsh*. According to al-Maqrīzī, Badr created an army of Armenians and “since then the Armenians constituted the majority of the armed forces, while the Maghribī Qutāmā turned into ordinary citizens, after holding the highest positions in the state.”⁹⁴ Obviously, a complete and abrupt watershed happened in the military and administrative situation. At the time of Badr’s arrival in Dumyāt, Turkish Ildekīz was in a position of absolute power in Cairo. In Dumyāt, Badr’s men eliminated the Lawātā Berbers led by Sulaymān al-Lawātī, and another clan known as the Melhiah, that was also a part of the Fāṭimid army. The Sudanese troops were in Upper Egypt.⁹⁵

As a first step and to relieve the famine, while in Dumyāt, Badr borrowed money from the merchants of Tinnīs and bought in grain to feed the populace. He entered Cairo after al-Mustaṣṣir had managed to remove Ildekīz (as a condition by Badr). In Cairo, Badr appeared to act as an ally of the Turks and spoke ill of Caliph al-Mustaṣṣir. He was taken as just another adventurer. His men entered Cairo in small numbers until their number reached nine hundred, according to al-Maqrīzī. In a banquet given in honor of the Turkish chieftains, Badr’s men killed everyone and were granted the possessions and estates of their victims. Badr was in a position of absolute power, and the Caliph was in no condition to calculate the risks involved in hosting a man such as Badr.⁹⁶

In his typical ruthlessness and pragmatism, Badr eliminated all the high officials, judges, and amīrs, in addition to the rebellious tribes. He cleared Cairo of all the adversaries of the caliphate, recovered some of the looted treasures of the palace, and was proclaimed Vizier of the Sword and the Pen (*wazīr al-sayf wa’l-qalam*).⁹⁷ In the region of Buḥayrah only, he was said to have exterminated about twenty thousand Arab tribesmen. By 1076, in less than two years, he cleared the country and brought the economic and military crises under control. From then on, he ruled over Egypt as an “absolute sovereign, and al-Mustaṣṣir had no choice but to delegate him authority in all matters.”⁹⁸ Badr had a private Armenian army—mounted and others—of more than seven thousand, as estimated by al-Maqrīzī. They lived with other civilian communities in al-Ḥārat al-Ḥusayniyah, which became a lively residential area with shops and markets.⁹⁹ Ibn Muyassar describes Badr as

... a handsome man ... of great *haybah* [imposing look], extremely harsh in his dealings and severe in punishments. Countless numbers of people, including prominent men and leaders of the Egyptians, were killed during his term, but at his hands the country was regenerated after having been corrupted, and reconstructed after being destroyed. He was an Armenian and a mamlūk of Jamāl al-Dawlah Ibn Ḥammār.¹⁰⁰

Clearly, the intervention of Badr and his men granted the ailing Fāṭimid Caliphate one more century. A military dictator and a tough disciplinarian, Badr reintroduced some order into the military. Known as the *hujariyah*, the official Fāṭimid troops were given greater attention and after a long absence, they started regaining their role.¹⁰¹ He brought the Sudanese under control, but relied only on his own Armenian *juyūshiyah* troops.¹⁰²

Reliance on private forces was not new. Vizier Ibn Killas had his *wazīriyah* troops, but the scale of the political involvement of Badr's *juyūshiyah* was much greater. In general, the Jamālīs and Ruzzīks, Bahrām as well, relied solely on their own compatriots. Even the gardeners of al-Afdal's palaces were Armenian.¹⁰³ According to Y. Sufean, the last contingent that was in charge of guarding the Fāṭimid palace was composed of Armenian *ktričs* (equivalent of the urban *fityān*, in this case, probably militant urban youth).¹⁰⁴ The majority of the *juyūshiyah* forces were Armenian in the beginning,¹⁰⁵ but during the twelfth century, Sudanese troops were recruited in the *juyūshiyah*, and they became the majority.¹⁰⁶ The focus on the army, says Lev, "reflected the drastic change in the hold of political power in the state. The Fāṭimid imamate was transferred into a military dictatorship."¹⁰⁷

Badr's men were soon raised to important positions as reliable supporters of the Fāṭimids. Amīr Bādis (or *Awetis*) and Naṣīr al-Dawlah Aftakīn were among the Armenians who arrived with Badr. The first was the grandfather of vizier 'Abbās; Aftakīn was one of Badr's Armenian military slaves who became the governor of Alexandria. Later on, he supported al-Mustanṣir's heir Nizār in the dispute over the succession.¹⁰⁸

Badr's vizierate was a reward and proved to be a turning point in the history of both the vizierate and the Fāṭimid Caliphate. For the first time in Fāṭimid history, al-Mustanṣir proclaimed Badr as not just a vizier with executive powers (*wazīr al-tanfīdh*) but also a vizier with full delegated powers (*wazīr al-tafwīd*).¹⁰⁹ The caliph even placed Badr in the position of a "father" to him, as he said. He described Badr as the

“guardian,” “eyes,” and “arm” of the caliphate.¹¹⁰ The ceremony of Badr’s appointment was a unique and unprecedented event. Al-Mustaṣṣir presented the decree of proclamation in his handwriting and wrapped in a golden case. By this decree, the *amīr al-mu’minīn* authorized Badr as the sole delegated administrator of the country, “to reform all that was corrupt and destroy everything that stood in resistance or persisted in its rebellious course.”¹¹¹ A copy of this official decree was sent to the Yemen, the last remaining province outside Egypt under Fāṭimid rule, in addition to fragments in al-Shām. Al-Mustaṣṣir offered the new vizier the white robe that was symbolic of the Fāṭimids and as a sign of his blessing, he threw his own robe on Badr’s shoulders.¹¹²

By the terms of this proclamation, the titles as well as the prerogatives of the Fāṭimid vizier underwent a radical change. All the viziers henceforth carried more or less the same titles, and a period of dictatorial viziers was started.¹¹³ Earlier, they were known as just *wazīr*, whereas now they are addressed as *al-sayyid*, or Lord. Badr’s name appeared on inscriptions such as “*Fatā* of the Commander of the Faithful . . . Abū’l-Najm Badr al-Mustaṣṣirī.”¹¹⁴ Badr, however, kept his previous title *amīr al-juyūsh* (as military governor of al-Shām) and his private forces, military slaves, properties, and the mosques he built were identified as *juyūshī*.¹¹⁵

In Fāṭimid Ismā‘īlism, the unique metaphysical position of the caliph-imām, theoretically at least, did not allow the delegation of caliphal prerogatives to anyone else. The vizierate of Badr established a precedent and a practice that continued to the end of the caliphate. From the beginning, Badr divided the roles, because he was aware of the obvious imbalance his vizierate was bound to create in the Fāṭimid Imāmate. As the supreme imām, al-Mustaṣṣir was confined to a primarily spiritual role, but at the administrative level, he was marginalized. He was even deprived of appointing the qāḍīs. These appointments were made on Badr’s behalf.¹¹⁶

The religious politics and loyalties of Badr were the most intriguing aspects of his career. In general, the manners in which he and the other Muslim Armenian viziers dealt with and manipulated Islam were extremely complex. Badr restored the Shī‘ī-Ismā‘īlī peculiarities that had been initially introduced by al-Qā‘id Jawhar, but were abandoned during the Turkish interval. He restored to the Shī‘ī *ādhān* (call for prayer) “*ḥayyi ‘alā khayr al-‘amal*,” (call for good work) established by Jawhar over a century earlier. This and similar measures insured Badr the reputation of a devout Shī‘ite Muslim. At the level of the Fāṭimid

rituals, where the centrality of the caliph was most of all manifest, the changes left their imprints. A good part of the traditional Fāṭimid ceremonies were omitted by Badr and his son al-Afḍal later on. P. Sanders says,

There is evidence of dramatic change in the observance of festivals during the years when the *wazīr* Badr al-Jamālī . . . and his son al-Afḍal . . . were the virtual rulers of the Fāṭimid Empire.¹¹⁷

There was a clear plan to turn the Fāṭimid state and society into more urbanized and multicultural entities. This move was in the interest of everyone and particularly the Armenian element. The reduction of Fāṭimid ritual was one of the measures taken by all the Jamālīs. After al-Afḍal's assassination, the rituals were restored by Badr's great grandson caliph al-Āmir and his vizier Ma'mūn al-Baṭā'iḥī.

Ismā'ilism was the spiritual "face" of the Fāṭimid Caliphate in Egypt. Badr made sure that as the state religion it was strongly reestablished after losing significance during the civil war. Surely, the move had political motives. He ordered the opening of theological seminaries (*bāb al-da'wah*) for the teaching of Ismā'ilism. In the restoration of the Fāṭimid creed, Badr saw the interest of the state, with which he identified himself. In fact, his reorganization of missionary work turned Fāṭimid Cairo into the center of Ismā'ilism, and Fāṭimid propaganda reached unprecedented levels. Al-Mustanṣir was recognized as the rightful Imām of the Ismā'ilīs.¹¹⁸ In other words, Badr used the spiritual role of the Fāṭimid state to reinforce its political legitimacy in primarily Sunnī Egypt. He was also very careful not to antagonize or alienate the Sunnī majority as well as the Coptic community of Egypt. He gave both the Sunnī and Shī'i communities freedom to apply their own laws of inheritance and the like.¹¹⁹ As Lev says, he balanced the return of Ismā'ilī teaching and propaganda by ending "the practice of following the Fāṭimid law in those cases when it differed from the other religious legal systems. Fāṭimid law was put on an equal footing with the Sunnite schools of law."¹²⁰ With an obvious exaggeration, it is said that during the reign of al-Mustanṣir, the number of the mosques and sanctuaries reached thirty-six thousand. Badr himself sponsored as well as financed both the construction and renovation of several mosques.

Badr's pro-Fāṭimid measures and his success in making Cairo the center of the Ismā'ilī da'wah did not mean that he intended the

Fāṭim�ization of Egypt. An initiative of this sort would endanger his own political position and interests in a Sunnī and Christian society. The question about the true religious loyalties of Badr is irrelevant. Badr was no doubt a deeply spiritual man, similar to most heterodox Armenians, but his religious zeal lacked dogma, on the basis of which the orthodoxy of any particular line could be judged. This was a major yet misunderstood aspect of Armenian heterodox spirituality: It is the dismissal of all dogma and religious morality, except the belief in one, all-powerful, just God and the commandment of love, that they interpreted as being both physical and spiritual, but more importantly, as an equalizing factor.

Very little is recorded about the private life of Badr except his friendship with the ascetic Christian King Solomon of Nubia in southernmost Egypt. This is perhaps the only chronicle available about the human side of this complex figure. Al-Maqrīzī¹²¹ and Abū Ṣāliḥ the Armenian have the same story about this African King, who found refuge (sometime in 1079/472H according to the former) in the Church of al-Wādī, which is three days' journey from Aswān. The king spent his time praying, and he was quoted as saying,

Who is there among the kings who can be saved by God while he still governs among men, and who is not swayed by his passions, and does not shed blood unjustly, and does not force men to do that which is not right for them?¹²²

Always according to Abū Ṣāliḥ, Badr invited King Solomon to Cairo, where he received him with royal honors and gave him an exquisite palace. Abū Ṣāliḥ continues,

In this house the king lived for one year, and he [Badr] visited him constantly, and conversed with him on many subjects and listened to his words. He found that he sought God . . . with all his heart and mind, renouncing all that men desire.¹²³

King Solomon was buried in the Church of al-Khandaq, where earlier Jawhar and vizier Bahrām (much later) were buried, "during the patriarchate of Cyril, the sixty-seventh patriarch."¹²⁴ The credibility of Abū Ṣāliḥ is not beyond doubt. He always tried to show that the Muslim Armenian figures secretly adhered to their old faith and that their Islam was a political tool and façade. However, still, Badr's friendship with a Christian figure was not much different from the friendship of

caliph al-Ḥāfiẓ with the Armenian patriarch of Itfīḥ and Bahrām. In a mixed society such as the Egyptian and all Near Eastern societies, spiritual rapport between people of different faiths was and still is very common. The phenomenon only shows that traditional scholars of Near Eastern history—including and especially Armenians—should seriously review their exclusive paradigms.

Badr established excellent relations with the Christian communities of Egypt, with conspicuous favoritism toward the Armenians. In 1084/477H, he arranged that the Church of al-Khandaq be transferred to the Armenians.¹²⁵ It was renovated and became one of the biggest churches of Cairo. Around 1169/564–565 and as a part of Ṣalāḥ ed-Dīn's persecutions of the Armenians, his rivals, the church was given back to the Copts.¹²⁶ Badr practically ran the affairs of the Coptic Church. During his term and as part of his highly centralized administration, he asked the Patriarch of the Copts to establish the patriarchal see in Cairo to have him under his direct control. Coptic historians have several stories about the intervention of Badr in their internal disputes.

The point to be made here is that irrespective of their declared loyalties to different trends in Islam—Ismā'īlī, Shī'ī, Sunnī, and Imāmī—and despite doctrinal flaws, the Islam of the three Jamālīs was distinguished by a sincere spiritual zeal beyond dogma. They seem to have retained some of their native faith and definitely a strong sense of their ethnicity, as can be observed later in this chapter. However, obviously, the classical loyalties to faith and language of Armenians were marginalized and even canceled, but as far as they were concerned, their Armenian identity was taken for granted. The perceptions of ethnicity, or so-called national identity, by these types seriously challenge the more common concepts that consider the classic loyalties as preconditions.

Badr took practical steps toward reforming and revitalizing the agricultural sector, which was historically the backbone of the Egyptian economy. After a "ruthless and sanguinary beginning," the *fallāḥūn* (agricultural peasants) were the people who first saw the benefits of the new regime.¹²⁷ He relieved them of land and produce tax for three years, and indeed they prospered.¹²⁸ His fairness and the atmosphere of security and confidence during his rule that was granted to the country encouraged an agrarian and economic revival.¹²⁹ According to Abū Ṣāliḥ, in 1090/403H, the revenue of Egypt increased by fifty percent.¹³⁰ The administrative division of Egypt into twenty-one provinces with

their centers and districts was applied by Badr for the first time.¹³¹ Badr's contribution to the recovery of the people from the aftermath of civil war and famine extended to the caliphate as well. The royal treasures and property were recovered from the looters and returned to the palace. Less than a hundred years later, Kurdish Ṣalāḥ ed-Dīn regarded the royal treasures and the palace as a part of war spoils and distributed them to his troops.

Badr's foreign policy focused on getting rid of the Turkish element and keeping them out of Egypt. In all respects, Fāṭimid Egypt was his last resort. Under the leadership of Alp Arslān and his son Malikshāh, the Turks expanded their power and pushed toward Egypt. When Nāwīkī Atsiz marched toward Cairo, Badr armed the people, including the Sudanese, and organized a jihād, as he declared. In 1078–1079/471H, Damascus was the capital of the Seljuk Kingdom in Syria and Palestine.¹³² However, Badr continued to put pressure on Tutush by fresh campaigns into 'Akkā and Tyre. In 1089, Nāṣir al-Dawlah was again sent to al-Shām. Tyre/Ṣūr in the south, Byblos/Jebayl, just south of Tripoli/Ṭarāblus in the north, and Ba'albeck in the east (all in modern Lebanon) were recovered and kept to the end of Badr's life.¹³³ Everywhere in the Near East, often claims of allegiance to the 'Abbāsīd Caliphate underlay anti-Fāṭimid uprisings, and the Seljuks were the main beneficiaries. In 1069–1070/462, the *sharīf* of Mecca had Malikshāh's name mentioned in the khuṭbah, but in the south, the Sulayhids of the Yemen remained loyal to the Fāṭimids.¹³⁴

Ten years before his death, in his late seventies, Badr faced a revolt led by his elder son, al-Awḥad, who fortified himself in Alexandria, a traditionally dissident city. Badr entered the city, captured the rebels, and was said to have personally drowned his own son as punishment. He used the money that the Alexandrians paid as fines to build the 'Aṭṭārīn Mosque, which, according to al-Maqrīzī, was still functioning to the end of the Fāṭimids. It was during the same year, in 1084–1085/581H, that he arranged the appointment of another son al-Afḍal as his "heir" in the vizierate. To mark the tragic event of his son's death, as well as the continuation of his authority through his other son al-Afḍal, as I believe, in the same year, Badr built the enigmatic Mosque or Mashhad on Muqāṭṭam Hill overlooking Cairo. This was "his" capital, which he had enclosed and fortified by walls and majestic gates of his construction. At his death in June 1094/Rabī' I, 487, Badr left a smaller yet prosperous and stable Fāṭimid state.

2. *Abū'l-Qāsim al-Afḍal Shāhanshāh Ibn Badr al-Jamālī*

As indicated earlier, ten years before his death and after the uprising led by his son al-Awḥad in Alexandria, Badr's initiative to proclaim his son al-Afḍal as his "heir in government" (*waliy 'ahdihi fīl-saltanah*) was unprecedented.¹³⁵ It seems that he had good reasons to plan this succession. Soon after his death, one of his Armenian ghlāms, al-Amīr Amīn al-Dawlah Ṣāfī Layūn (Lewon), managed to get the approval of the other Armenian amīrs of Badr and caliph al-Mustanṣir, in particular, to succeed his master in the vizierate. According to al-Maqrizī, the caliph did, in fact, appoint him, but another Armenian of the same background, Naṣr al-Dawlah Aftakīn, warned everyone of Lewon's stinginess and the absurdity of obeying one of their peers, or *khushd* (the Arabized form of the Persian *khwajadash* or colleague in service), while the sons of their *ustādh* (master/teacher) Badr were alive and eligible. Faithful and grateful to their master and afraid of Lewon's modest background, the Armenian amīrs presented themselves to the caliph and swore to annul the vizierate of Lewon. The caliph eventually gave in.¹³⁶

Abū'l-Qāsim al-Afḍal Shāhanshāh Ibn Badr al-Jamālī was proclaimed vizier and ruled as an absolute monarch for twenty-seven years (1094/487H–1121/515H). Similar to Badr's fortified vizierate, al-Afḍal's hereditary vizierate was a precedent. He also inherited the problems immanent in the position that his father had created for himself and his heir. Badr had successfully avoided the consequences of the disruption of the balance between caliphal and vizierial prerogatives by enforcing the spiritual role of the Fāṭimid caliph as the supreme *imām* of all the Ismā'īlis. Relying solely on the *afḍaliyah*, or his private Armenian troops as his power base, al-Afḍal had a more blunt style and inevitably put pressure on the caliphate and the administration. The caliph died a few months after Badr's death. "In December 1094/Dhu'l-Hijjā 487, Abū Tamīm Ma'add al-Mustanṣir b'illāh, the eighth Fāṭimid caliph and the eighteenth imām of the Fāṭimid Ismā'īlis, died in Cairo after a reign of some sixty years, during which the Fāṭimid Caliphate was well embarked on its way to collapse." With his death, the classical period of the Fāṭimid Caliphate came to an end.¹³⁷

Ambiguity surrounded al-Mustanṣir's *naṣṣ* (designation decree) for the succession to the Fāṭimid Imāmate. Of his four sons, Nizār, Abdallāh, Ismā'īl, and Aḥmad, the eldest was Nizār. He was fifty years old at the time and claimed to have in his possession the written *naṣṣ*

for the succession. According to al-Maqrizī, al-Mustanṣir had only orally expressed his intention to designate Nizār as his heir in the presence of the notorious Dā'ī (missionary) al-Ḥasan Ibn al-Ṣabbāḥ (d.1124/518H), Nizār's father-in-law, who was said to be in Cairo in 1086/479H.¹³⁸ The latter became the founder of Nizārī Ismā'īlism and the Assassins, or the *Hashshāshūn* of the fortress of Alamūt in northwest Iran.¹³⁹ When the news of the caliph's death reached vizier al-Afḍal, he arranged matters with the high officials at the court for the proclamation of his nephew Abu'l-Qāsim Aḥmad aṣ Caliph al-Musta'li bi'llāh. He was a much younger son of al-Mustanṣir by al-Afḍal's sister, or Badr's daughter.¹⁴⁰ Al-Afḍal asked the other sons of the caliph to bow before the new imām. They refused and when challenged to produce the written naṣṣ, Nizār left the palace. He fled to Alexandria, where he fortified himself. His supporters proclaimed him as Caliph al-Muṣṭafā li-Dīn Allāh¹⁴¹ and designated an Armenian mamlūk of Badr, Naṣr al-Dawlah Aftakīn, as his vizier.¹⁴² After a failed attempt, al-Afḍal entered Alexandria and brought Nizār to Cairo, where he died in prison.

A relatively insignificant incident involving Nizār and al-Afḍal at a much earlier time is taken by some to be the cause of their mutual resentment and enmity. Al-Maqrizī narrates that one day when al-Afḍal was entering through "one of the palace gates mounted," he met Nizār, who shouted at him, "*inzil yā armanī al-jins*" or "get down [you of the] Armenian [race]."¹⁴³ In Ibn Muyassar's version written earlier, instead of *jins* (race, species), the word *nijis* appears. *Nijis* means *impure*, in reference to Afḍal's non-Muslim background.¹⁴⁴ Consequently, the sentence becomes "get down you impure Armenian." The Armenian ethnicity of the Jamālīs had prompted worse insults, as indicated by records as well. In any case, an incident of this nature would hardly have altered the course of events in any significant way. Even if the explicit naṣṣ was made public, al-Afḍal, who considered himself the actual sovereign over a country that his father and compatriots had saved from certain destruction, would not have allowed the caliphate to slip away from his direct control.

The hostility between Nizār and al-Afḍal, however, involves another detail of some importance. The incident just mentioned happened many years before al-Mustanṣir's death, and it appears that despite the positive role of the Armenians at that junction in Fāṭimid history, the Armenian background of the Jamālīs may not have been a pleasant matter even for the royal family. The Jamālīs were Muslim, and it is highly uncommon to hear one Muslim call another *nijis*, if we accept

Ibn Muyassar's version. Either the Islam of Badr's family and that of the community of Muslim Armenians was subject to suspicion or al-Afḍal personally had aroused suspicion through his public behavior. Badr, in turn, was insulted as "wretched dog" (in reference to his being a non-Muslim), and al-Afḍal, as "wretched son of an Armenian slave" or mamlūk, in a clear reference to their Christian-Armenian-mamlūk background.¹⁴⁵ Without specifying his sources or reasons, Alishan believed that Badr was "half-Christian and half-Muslim."¹⁴⁶ He probably made a personal interpretation based on Badr's role in renovating and building churches and Abū Ṣāliḥ's report—in turn not established—about Badr being buried in a church. Furthermore, all Armenian sects, from the Paulicians to the T'ondrakians, were syncretistic and were considered half-Christian and half-Muslim. My hypothesis about the sectarian connection between the north or the historic homeland, Armenia, and the Islamic south or al-Shām and Egypt and the background of Badr and his men finds grounds also in these fragments of data.

Both Badr and al-Afḍal were pragmatic figures and whenever they showed concern or were involved in religious matters, it was for purely political considerations. The designation decree had no significance for them. Al-Afḍal simply raised his eighteen-year-old nephew al-Musta'li to the throne and became the virtual head of the caliphate. The intervention may have been beneficial for the country but, as Daftary says, it caused the "greatest internal crisis of the Fāṭimid dynasty" and the movement. In response to al-Afḍal's choice of an heir, Ibn al-Ṣabbāḥ declared his allegiance to Nizār as the rightful Imām, thus becoming the founder of Nizārī or Eastern Ismā'ilism, and issued coins in the name of Nizār or the *Imām al-Muṣṭafā li-Dīn Allāh*.¹⁴⁷

Ismā'ilism was divided between the Musta'lians (Musta'lawiyyah or Musta'liyah) and the Nizārīs (Nizāriyah).¹⁴⁸ Almost immediately, an opposition to al-Musta'li's imāmate was formed led by al-Ḥasan Ibn al-Ṣabbāḥ, who earlier did not seem to get along with Badr. This was because he wanted to take over the position of *dā'i al-du'āt* or Chief of Fāṭimid missionaries, but Badr had already made this important office a part of his vizierial prerogatives. In the late 1080s, Ibn al-Ṣabbāḥ was already trying to secure the succession of al-Mustanṣir by getting his daughter married to Nizār.¹⁴⁹ Totally powerless and discouraged by Badr, Ibn al-Ṣabbāḥ left Egypt to Syria and moved to Iran, where he took the fortress of Alamūt as his stronghold.¹⁵⁰ Often mixed with

legend, the fascinating history of the Fortress of Alamūt is a significant part of Ismā'īlī history.

It is very likely that the succession was initially planned by Badr at a much earlier time. It was just another aspect of his shrewd planning and foresight. If al-Musta'li was eighteen years old in 1094, his mother, Badr's daughter, must have married al-Mustanşir around 1075, within the first year of the vizierate of Badr. The idea of enthroning his grandson may have been a part of Badr's wider project. Al-Afḍal was simply following in his father's footsteps. Al-Musta'li died prematurely in 1101/494H, at the age of twenty-five, and according to Ibn Muyassar, he was poisoned by the Nizāris.¹⁵¹ Al-Afḍal immediately raised the caliph's five-year-old son, his sister's grandson, Abū 'Alī al-Manşūr as caliph al-Āmir bī Aḥkām Allāh (1101/494H–1130/524H).¹⁵²

Four years after his appointment, in 1098/491H, al-Afḍal organized a large expedition to the north into Palestine and Lebanon. He recovered Jerusalem from Turkish Ortuqids Suqmān and Ilghāzī,¹⁵³ and cleared the coast all the way to the Dog River (Nahr al-Kalb) north of Beirut.¹⁵⁴ In his narration of Al-Afḍal's Palestinian campaign, Runciman refers to his father as "the Armenian renegade Badr al-Jamāli." This brief recovery of Jerusalem had little military significance, but if we read al-Maqrīzī's account in the *Iḥṭi'āz*, the incident opens up a most obscure page in the history of Armenian involvement in Syria and Palestine. He says,

In the year 1098/491H al-Afḍal led a great army from Cairo and recovered the Holy City from the Armenians, he then returned home.¹⁵⁵

This is the only record of heavy Armenian military presence as a part of the Turkish forces in Jerusalem before the arrival of the First Crusade there. In the seventh year of al-Afḍal's vizierate in 1100–1101/493H, Jerusalem became a Crusader kingdom. From the early periods of Crusader expansion in Asia Minor, al-Afḍal was made aware of their arrival in Syria and Palestine, in particular, but only gradually, he must have understood the real motives of the Franks. While in Constantinople, the Greeks advised the Franks to come to some form of an understanding with the Fātimids. In general, Cairo and Constantinople were in cordial and positive terms. The Crusaders were told that the Fātimids (and the Muslim Armenians who were in power in Egypt) were "uncompromising enemies of the Turks, they

were tolerant towards their Christian subjects and had always been ready to treat with Christian powers."¹⁵⁶ During the siege of Nicaea, a Frankish delegation went to Cairo with a message to the Fāṭimids,¹⁵⁷ and in early 1098/491H, "an Egyptian embassy arrived at the camp before Antioch, sent by al-Afḍal." According to Runciman, ignorant of the true intentions of the Crusades and considering them "mercenaries of the Emperor," the vizier may have proposed a division of the Seljuk Empire. The south, that is Palestine and south Syria, would be under Fāṭimid control, and the north would be under the Franks.¹⁵⁸

As discussed elsewhere, another Armenian in the service of Yaghī Siyān, the Turkish Governor of Antioch, called Firūz/Fayrūz (Nairūz) was directly involved in the fall of Antioch. He was in charge of one of the Tower of Two Sisters (facing the castle of Tancred). Almost every history of the period has a variant of the story of this man. Runciman says that "though outwardly loyal he was jealous of his master . . . and kept in touch with his former co-religionists" or the Armenians.¹⁵⁹ Through his allies, the Armenians, the city was sold to Bohemund in a deal that remained a strict secret to the end of the operation. On June 2, at nightfall, Firūz, who was in command in the tower, allowed Bohemund's soldiers to enter. Most Muslims of the city and others were massacred and by the evening of June 3, 1098, Antioch was in the hands of the Crusaders. Nothing more is known of this obscure figure who may have been a middle-aged man. He had a son who acted as his messenger during negotiations with Bohemund.¹⁶⁰ Yaghī Siyān managed to get out of the city, but he fell off his horse, and was spotted and killed by Armenian peasants, who took his head to the Franks.¹⁶¹ G. Wiet describes the same account of the fall of Antioch but with fewer details.¹⁶² In the same year, in 1098, future vizier Bahrām was in 'Akkā and hardly made an escape from the "infidels who wanted to kill him."¹⁶³ This fragment of information throws some light on Bahrām's whereabouts in Syria before his arrival in Egypt.

The fall of Edessa and Antioch to the Crusaders caused serious disappointment to the Seljuks and encouraged al-Afḍal, who saw in the Crusaders a new power and perhaps an ally in the face of Seljuk expansion in Syria and Palestine. However, he soon realized the futility of negotiations with them. On June 7, 1099, after a long journey through coastal towns, the Frankish armies were before the walls of the Holy City. Jerusalem fell in mid-July, and the brutal massacre of more than seventy thousand Muslims shook the Muslim world. Al-Afḍal sent an embassy to Jerusalem to present a strong protest and

asked the Franks to evacuate the city, and soon afterward, he arrived in Palestine at the head of a large army. On August 12, on the plane of al-Majdal, just north of 'Akkā, the Fāṭimid army was almost completely destroyed, and al-Afḍal barely made an escape. "The booty taken by the victors was immense"; al-Afḍal's personal arms embellished with gold and jewels were sold at high prices.¹⁶⁴

Three years later, in 1102/495H, "the Fāṭimid army, composed probably of Badr's Armenian veterans, had their full revenge near 'Akkā. They defeated Baldwin and seven hundred knights."¹⁶⁵ This is the only explicit mention of the Fāṭimid Armenian military involvement against the Crusaders. Ramlah was briefly recovered and then lost; another battle was waged for Ramlah the next year, but by 1104/497H, most of Palestine was under Crusader control. In 1109/502H, Tripoli fell; Tyre and 'Akkā remained in Fāṭimid hands till 1124/518H, and then 1153/548H. In 1117/511H, Baldwin invaded Egypt and reached Tinnis, and if it were not for his illness, events might have taken an unfavorable turn for the Fāṭimids.

Al-Afḍal is often given credit for reforming the Fāṭimid army.¹⁶⁶ The initiative followed his massive defeat in 'Akkā in 1099/492H.¹⁶⁷ According to al-Maqrīzī, he felt that the army failed in its mission to liberate and recover Palestine. A poet who dared to ridicule al-Afḍal and praised the Franks was executed.¹⁶⁸ After this defeat, al-Afḍal put the Fāṭimid armies in Palestine under the command of his son (no name mentioned).¹⁶⁹ In addition to vizier Abū 'Alī Aḥmad Kutayfāt Ibn al-Afḍal, another son is also mentioned by al-Maqrīzī. He is Sharaf al-Ma'ālī Ibn al-Afḍal and was said to have served both al-Musta'li and al-Āmir, perhaps first as an assistant to his father and then as vizier for a very brief while. He was assassinated in 1121/Ramaḍān 515, and within the same year, Abū 'Abdallāh Muḥammad al-Ma'mūn Ibn Fātik Ibn Mukhtār al-Baṭā'iḥī was appointed vizier of caliph al-Āmir. Four years later, in 1125/Ramadan 519, al-Baṭā'iḥī was also killed.¹⁷⁰ It seems that to camouflage the murder of his great uncle al-Afḍal, al-Āmir immediately appointed one of the latter's sons as vizier, then liquidated him, and, finally, appointed al-Baṭā'iḥī. Other Arab sources make no mention of this vizier who was, in fact, the third vizier from the Jamālī House.

There is some ambiguity about the exact nature of al-Afḍal's reform of the *hujrahs* or the military barracks.¹⁷¹ However, two inferences can be made with reasonable certainty: first, that a strict program of training was introduced to develop a regular army; second, instead of

relying on slaves, the children of free men were recruited and trained to become professional soldiers. In this context, a very important note should be made about the possible roots of al-Afḍal's measures in the very ancient Armenian custom of the training of boys from a very early age. They were taught wrestling, horse-riding, archery, and other military sports. Al-Afḍal's measures to reform the Fāṭimid army were also reminiscent of the Armenian custom of dividing the youth into age groups and the emphasis on free men rather than on slaves or peasants. These trained youth were called *ktričs*.

For al-Afḍal, a professional army of free men rather than servile manpower was a natural prerequisite for a sovereign state. The project of the *hujariyah* was abandoned after his death. Caliphs al-Āmir and al-Ḥāfiẓ had their own troops and made use of the *ṣibyān al-khāṣṣ* (special/private force of youth) of the palace whenever necessary. Kutayfāt employed his father's Afḍaliyah troops. Vizier Yānis had his Yānisiyah troops. Future vizier Ṭalā'ī Ibn Ruzzik arrived in Cairo at the head of his own, mostly Armenian, troops. In fact, everything connected to him, including these troops, was called al-Ṣālihiyah (one of his titles was *al-malik al-ṣāliḥ*, meaning righteous king/ruler) after him.

A good part of Badr's term was not only spent in restoring what was destroyed, but he also established unprecedented practices and policies. Al-Afḍal inherited an already recovered kingdom that could accommodate his larger vision of a luxurious and culturally more refined state. His agrarian and fiscal reforms were launched around 1107–1108/500–501H, after he seemed to have given up hopes of recovering Syria and Palestine. The lunar and solar calendars were adjusted, mainly to regulate the collection of taxes (by the solar calendar) and their calculations (by the lunar calendar). The conversion or the adjustment (*tahwīl*) having been neglected for a long time, the difference reached four years.¹⁷²

Al-Afḍal's next step was the reform of the *iqṭā'* system in which "malpractices . . . had become rampant."¹⁷³ (173) Previous divisions were canceled, and the land was redistributed. Leases and investment contracts were signed for approximately thirty-year terms. The reforms benefited the small land holders, who had initially presented their grievances to al-Afḍal. During al-Afḍal's vizierate, the revenue of the country doubled, according to al-Maqrīzī. At the hands of the amīrs and the holders of land, that is the military *iqṭā'* holders, the land prospered, and taxes received from the granaries increased.¹⁷⁴ As a result of al-Afḍal's redistribution of land and changes in the rental

systems, there was an increase not only in the revenue but also in the military capacity of the holders of these lands. They could, theoretically at least, participate more efficiently "in important political and military actions."¹⁷⁵

The complex personality of al-Afḍal, his legendary treasures, palaces,¹⁷⁶ and his extremely lavish lifestyle were favorite subjects for medieval historians. The latter also speak of his justice and strict attitude toward the application of laws. He was also oversensitive toward remarks made about his ethnic background. He had a large intelligence force that also dealt with trivia. Even his cunning and intelligent mother, Badr's wife, often spied for him disguised as a poor old lady and informed her son of public opinion. Al-Maqrīzī mentions some of these remarks that were mostly made by anti-Fāṭimid Sunnī individuals. Al-Afḍal was sometimes also referred to by fanatics as "Armenian dog," "hypocritical dog," "evil son of an evil Armenian slave," and so on. Those who made these remarks paid with their lives but not property. Al-Afḍal always made sure that the rightful inheritors received their share and as al-Maqrīzī says, "contrary to past practice, no one was ever deprived of his rightful inheritance."¹⁷⁷

It is possible that remarks about his Armenian background were provoked by conspicuously "Armenian behavior" on his part, though sources contain no evidence in this regard. It is hard to tell whether in the opinion of his opponents, his alleged "hypocrisy" was a cover for his ethnicity, and/or his Sunnī sympathies. Whatever the truth, the clues to his cultural-religious personality and loyalties are to be sought in his career, lifestyle, and contribution to the country and society. A more intriguing aspect of the cultural personality of al-Afḍal is his love of poetry, which is a very Arabic art. Some of his verses were preserved in Ibn Muṣṣar's chronicles. One of the fragments is dedicated to his *jāriyah* (slave-girl), and another is dedicated to his favorite ghulām Tāj al-Ma'ālī. These lines reveal a passionate and violently jealous man. His *jāriyah* lost her head for being seen by her master looking out to the street from the roof of the house. The poem is a strange epithet that he recites with her beautiful head "safely" tucked in his lap.¹⁷⁸

Al-Afḍal's monopoly of power was bound to generate antagonism and violence. In addition to al-Āmir (otherwise a reckless and drunken youth) and the religious fanatics, Maymūn 'Abd al-Majīd (al-Āmir's cousin and future caliph al-Ḥāfiẓ) became al-Afḍal's most dangerous enemy. It was by al-Āmir's orders and 'Abd al-Majīd's collaboration that the assassination plot of al-Afḍal succeeded. Al-Āmir did away with

the office of the vizier for the remaining of his short term. In 1130, he was murdered by his closest associates.

There are several versions and interpretations of al-Afḍal's assassination in the spring of 1121/515H. Ibn Muyassar, who died in 1160, was his contemporary. He believes that caliph al-Āmir was the organizer of the entire episode. He says that a Bāṭinī (Ismā'īlī), called al-Badī', attacked al-Afḍal while he was on his way to Dār al-Mulk, his palace. The alleged murderer was said to have been a member of the Badī'iyah sect (followers of al-Ḥurra Bint al-Sulayḥī), twenty members of which al-Afḍal had executed.¹⁷⁹ Ibn al-Qalānisī, in turn, accused al-Āmir of the plot and blaming the Bāṭinīs. According to him, in the beginning, al-Āmir had been planning to murder al-Afḍal in his palace, but on the advice of 'Abd al-Majīd, he refrained from creating a scandal in the Fāṭimid court. In view of the good reputation of the Jamālīs for their services to the country, a murder of this nature would place him in an extremely unfavorable light.¹⁸⁰ There was universal admiration toward al-Āmir's great uncle al-Afḍal and his great grandfather Badr. Most Arab historians described the careers of the two Jamālīs in very positive terms. Lane-Poole says,

For almost half a century, from 1074 to 1121 these two great Armenians were, in all but name, kings of Egypt, and to their mild just rule, as much as to their energy and firm control, the country owed half a century of internal quiet and prosperity.¹⁸¹

The entire career of al-Āmir was devoted to reestablishing Fāṭimid rituals and their related traditions; otherwise, he had a very bad reputation. Ibn Muyassar says that he was an "ill-behaved man in the community and despotic in his treatment of people." He randomly confiscated peoples' property, "shed blood indiscriminately, committed forbidden deeds and enjoyed obscenities."¹⁸²

3. *Abū 'Alī Aḥmad Kutayfāt al-Akmal Ibn al-Afḍal (1131)*

The controversy and mystery surrounding al-Āmir's heir and subsequent events are very relevant for this study, because they reveal the manners in which they were manipulated by al-Afḍal's son, Abū 'Alī Aḥmad Kutayfāt al-Akmal Ibn al-Afḍal, the third/fourth and last Jamālī vizier.

Ambiguity surrounded the birth of al-Āmir's heir, Abū'l-Qāsim al-Ṭayyib. According to some sources, it was announced by the caliph

himself to Sulayḥid queen al-Malikah al-Sayyidah of the Yemen. There are other accounts about a posthumously born child (male or female, killed or smuggled to al-Yemen, etc.). When al-Āmir died and for a conveniently long period, there was, in effect, no heir. His cousin 'Abd al-Majīd stayed on as regent, "pending the expected delivery of al-Āmir's pregnant wife." Two favorite assistants (most probably Armenians) of al-Āmir, Hazarmard or Hizabr al-Mulūk and Barghash, ruled the country, keeping 'Abd al-Majīd in a nominal position. Eventually, Hizabr al-Mulūk assumed the vizierate and appointed Yānis al-Rumī al-Armanī, a general in the army, as the chamberlain of the regent, 'Abd al-Majīd. The latter was said to have managed to liquidate al-Āmir's heir, if there was one anyway.¹⁸³ The brief period that followed gave a margin to al-Afḍal's son, Kutayfāt. Two weeks after al-Āmir's (his cousin's, caliph Musta'li's son) death, mostly Armenian Juyūshiyah forces loyal to the Jamālīs, and seeking revenge for al-Afḍal, raised Kutayfāt to the vizierate. Kutayfāt was one of the few surviving members of al-Afḍal's family who were massacred by al-Āmir's men.

Kutayfāt's manner of using the vizierate as a means of absolute power was politically more sophisticated than that of his predecessors. He declared allegiance to Twelver Shī'ism or Imāmism, which contradicted Fāṭimid Ismā'īlism. A contemporary and a compatriot, future vizier Ṭalā'ī Ibn Ruzzīk was also an Imāmī. While the latter was a sincere and devout Imāmī, Kutayfāt only claimed to be a Twelver Shī'ī to manipulate the vizierate and diminish/cancel the status of the Fāṭimid caliph. Based on a decree issued by the Fāṭimid chancery to the Monks of Mount Sinai (two weeks after the vizierate of Kutayfāt), Stern believes that for a short time Kutayfāt acted as vizier, whereas 'Abd al-Majīd was regent (*wālī 'ahd al-muslimin*).¹⁸⁴ When Kutayfāt was certain that there was no heir, he "declared the Fāṭimid dynasty deposed and placed the empire under the ideal sovereignty of the Expected Imām, the Mahdī of the imamate of the Twelver Shī'is." The regency became superfluous, Hizabr al-Mulūk was executed, and 'Abd al-Majīd was thrown into prison until December 8, 1131/Muḥarram 16, 526H, the date of the assassination of Kutayfāt.¹⁸⁵

The initiative to adhere to the Expected Imām was perhaps suggested indirectly as a ruse by 'Abd al-Majīd himself. After the disappearance of al-Ṭayyib (whose designation was publicly celebrated in March–April 1130/Rabī' II 524), "an official version put in circulation" revealed that "al-Āmir prophesied his murder, the exact disposition of

power following his death and the fact that one of his women would deliver a son for whom 'Abd al Majīd would act as guardian." Obviously, and as Stern and Lev suggest, the author of the statement had two objectives: to nullify the succession of al-Ṭayyib and to legitimize the new order.¹⁸⁶ Subsequent events proved the involvement of 'Abd al Majīd, future caliph al-Ḥāfiẓ, from the beginning in the complications of al-Āmir's succession. In turn, Kutayfāt also, in the absence of a caliph, used an "ingenious religious-political solution to the succession problem" and "acquired a unique position of power, ruling as a dictator responsible to no one in theory and in practice."¹⁸⁷

One of the most intriguing aspects of the Armenian Period in Egypt is the manner in which the three Jamālī viziers manipulated Islam and translated it into absolute power. As a devout Ismā'īlī Shī'ī, Badr allowed caliph al-Mustanṣir to play a primarily spiritual role as supreme Imām in charge of Fāṭimid propaganda. This was a way to avoid a crisis of power between the caliph-imām and the vizier, and seemed to be accepted by everyone concerned, under the circumstances of course. Al-Afdāl, who was known for his Sunnī sympathies, and conveniently so, deliberately overlooked the metaphysical position and unique nature of the Fāṭimid Imāmate. He worked toward the secularization of the state, something Badr would not do in view of the nature of Islamic society and irrespective of the trends. Ten years after his father's death, Kutayfāt eliminated the imāmate altogether from physical existence by proclaiming his allegiance to the Expected Imām, who in 874/260H was said to have entered a period of occultation or *ghaybah*.¹⁸⁸ Kutayfāt's initiative amounted to rejecting the Fāṭimid claim to the imāmate, and establishing his own rule on a legitimate Twelver Shī'ī belief in the Expected rather than the Apparent Imām. It is difficult to see purely religious objectives behind Kutayfāt's measures. Even if Kutayfāt was planning to replace Fāṭimid Ismā'ilism with Twelver Shī'ism or Imāmism, as Surūr suggested,¹⁸⁹ his objectives were political and not religious.

In the context of the events that preceded and surrounded Kutayfāt's short term in office, a mention should be made about the Armenian Barghash, which has been just mentioned. He was a ghulām of al-Āmir, and according to the historian al-Qaṭṭān, he played a direct role in eliminating his master and assisting the Juyūshiyah and the Afdāliyah forces in their military coup against 'Abd al-Majīd. *Barghash* means mosquito in Arabic, but it is also the distorted form of the

Armenian Vagharsh, a proper name. Judging from his pro-Jamālī and pro-Armenian deeds (if the account of al-Qaṭṭān is true), there is a substantial possibility that this figure also was an Armenian. When ‘Abd al-Majīd was acting as regent, along with Hizabr al-Mulūk or Hazarmard, Barghash ruled, leaving the regent in a nominal position. After Hizabr’s appointment to the vizierate (by ‘Abd al-Majīd), Barghash joined Kutayfāt and liquidated his rival.¹⁹⁰

Once in a position of unprecedented power, Kutayfāt modified the Friday prayers according to his Imāmī line of Islam. Ibn Muyassar says that he omitted the mention of the Imām Ismā’il Ibn Ja’far al-Ṣādiq from the prayers, the phrase “*hayyi ‘ala khayr al-‘amal*” from the ādhān (that al-Qā’id Jawhar had introduced to Egypt in 969 and which Badr reestablished in 1074), and the name of al-Ḥāfiẓ the regent from the khuṭbah. Instead, he arranged a special mention of his own name as “Deputee of the Expected Imām, the Guide and Defender of the True Faith, its Followers and Administrator of the Affairs of the State, Vizier of the Sword and the Pen, Abū Aḥmad Ibn al-Sayyid al-Ajall al-Afḍal Shahanshāh Amīr al-Juyūsh.”¹⁹¹ To reduce the importance of Fāṭimid Ismā’ilism in Egypt still further, Kutayfāt took an unusual step: He appointed four judges, two Sunnīs (a Shāfi‘ī and a Mālikī) and two Shī‘īs (an Ismā’īlī and an Imāmī).¹⁹²

Kutayfāt ruled as an absolute monarch, and even his fanatical opponents expressed no discontentment toward his administration. “The tradition of good government was strong in his family,” observes Lane-Poole. He was “just and benevolent, tolerant and generous to the Copts, and a great lover of poetry,” similar to his father.¹⁹³ Speaking of Kutayfāt’s justice, Ibn Khallikān says that he returned to the people all that al-Āmir had confiscated from them,¹⁹⁴ and recovered some of what al-Āmir had looted from his father’s treasures. They were so many that it took al-Āmir forty days to empty al-Afḍal’s palace and treasury. Acting as sovereign, Kutayfāt issued coins during 1131/525–526H in the name of the Expected Imām, “al-Imām Muḥammad Abū’l-Qāsim al-Muntaẓar li-Amr Allāh, and al-Imām al-Mahdī al-Qā’im bi-Amr Allāh, in some of which his name appeared as the Hidden Imām’s representative (*nā’ib*) and deputy (*khalīfah*).”¹⁹⁵ Soon, however, a military coup was organized by loyal Ismā’ilīs and the Qutāma faction of the army led by Abū’l-Faṭḥ Yānis al-Rūmī al-Armanī, the chamberlain of ‘Abd al-Majīd, a *mamlūk* of al-Afḍal. Kutayfāt was murdered on December 8, 1131/Muharram 16, 526H by the ṣibyān al-khāṣṣ of

al-Āmir,¹⁹⁶ when he was on his way to play polo.¹⁹⁷ 'Abd al-Majīd was released from prison, and Yānis was appointed vizier as a reward for his role in the assassination of his master's, al-Afḍal's, son.

To the end of the Fāṭimid Caliphate, the release of 'Abd al-Majīd from prison and his restoration to his previous position as regent was celebrated as *ʿĪd al-Naṣr*, or the Feast of Victory.¹⁹⁸ In the year 1131/526H, coins were issued in Alexandria on which 'Abd al-Majīd's name appeared as *waliyy al-ʾahd*.¹⁹⁹ Three months later, in February 1132 /Rabīʿ II 526, he was proclaimed Fāṭimid caliph-imām *al-Ḥāfiẓ li-Dīn Allāh*, with the implication that he was a "guardian" for the Fāṭimid Caliphate. The text of the proclamation (without a date) is preserved in al-Qalqashandī's *Ṣubḥ al-Aʾshā*.²⁰⁰ The precedent to legitimize the succession was the proclamation of 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib, a cousin of the Prophet, as caliph.²⁰¹ Al-Mustanṣir's grandson and a cousin of al-Āmir, 'Abd al-Majīd was constantly in a weak position because of the problem of his own legitimacy. However, he managed to maintain his position for almost two decades.

C. Abū'l-Faṭḥ Yānis al-Rūmī al-Armanī (1132)

Yānis was of a relatively modest background, and he was proclaimed vizier with the same titles that had been in use since Badr's time.²⁰² According to Ibn Muyassar, Yānis (Yovhannēs in Armenian, or John) the mamlūk was a present to al-Afḍal from his original owner Bādīs, the grandfather of 'Abbās, the vizier of caliph al-Zāfir bī Amr Allāh (1149/544H–1154/549/H).²⁰³ As soon as Yānis felt some security in his new position, he eliminated the ṣibyān al-khāṣṣ of the royal palace and formed the Yānisiyah forces as his power base. From then on, and during his short term of only nine months from the spring of 1132 to its end,²⁰⁴ the career of Yānis followed Badr's legacy. He was said to have the latter's haybah, and was a strict disciplinarian and an ambitious man.²⁰⁵ He was also a devout Ismāʿīlī and began the construction of two small mosques.²⁰⁶ Caliph al-Ḥāfiẓ, however, could not be indifferent to the rapid rise of this Armenian vizier. He arranged the assassination of Yānis by poisoning his ablution water with the help of the court physician. Ibn Muyassar devoted several sections to the ugly plot, as did al-Maqrizī.²⁰⁷ Caliph al-Ḥāfiẓ adopted the two sons of his victim. After a number of attempts to work with a vizier, Yānis, his two sons, Bahrām and Ibn Walakhshī, he eventually ruled without a vizier to the end of his caliphate.

D. *The Nuṣayrī Banū Ruzzīks and the End of Armenian Vizierial Rule*

“The last time a vizier was appointed by a Fāṭimid caliph,” says Lane-Poole, was when Ibn Maṣāl became vizier to the sixteen-year-old caliph al-Zāfir, the youngest son of al-Ḥāfiẓ.²⁰⁸ The next vizier was the governor of Alexandria, ʿĀdil Ibn al-Sallār who seized power in 1150 with an additional title of *al-Malik al-ʿĀdil* (just king). After his death in 1153/548H, his step son ʿAbbās al-Ṣanhājī imposed his vizierate on caliph al-Zāfir. In April 1154/16 Muḥarram 549, the twenty-one-year-old caliph was murdered in obscure circumstances probably by ʿAbbās and his son, who then assassinated the caliph’s two brothers and accused them of the murder. Amid great confusion, ʿIsā, the five-year-old son of al-Zāfir, was proclaimed as *Caliph al-Fāʿiz bī-Naṣr Allāh* (1154/549–1160/555H).²⁰⁹

1. *Abūʿl-Ghārāt Fāris al-Muslimīn Ṭalāʾīʾ Ibn Ruzzīk* (1154/549H–1161/556H)

These events and the indignation of the populace drove the ladies of the royal household and Sitt al-Quṣūr, al-Zāfir’s sister, in particular, to appeal for help from the governor of Ushmūnayn, the *nuṣayrī* Armenian Ṭalāʾīʾ Ibn Ruzzīk.²¹⁰ On April 16, 1154/Muḥarram 549, at the head of a large and mainly Armenian force, he entered Cairo dressed in black, raising black flags of mourning and on the spears of the soldiers, locks of hair that the ladies of the royal family in distress sent him,²¹¹ as “the strongest possible sign of entreaty in a *muslimah*” (Muslim woman).²¹² Ṭalāʾīʾ ruthlessly put an end to civil strife and anarchy and gave a proper funeral to the assassinated caliph al-Zāfir, whose body had been thrown into a well. Barefooted and bareheaded, he personally carried the coffin with the mourners.²¹³ Proclaimed vizier with an unprecedented list of titles, he was also referred to as *al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ and al-Sulṭān*.²¹⁴

Ṭalāʾīʾ Ibn Ruzzīk was an Armenian, according to Ibn Taghrī Birdī, al-Ṣafādī, Ibn al-Athīr, al-Dhahabī, and most other sources.²¹⁵ According to H. Derenbourg, he was called *Fāris al-Dīn* (knight of religion), because “this Armenian of base origin was not a Christian.”²¹⁶ Exactly eighty years after Badr’s appearance on the stage of Fāṭimid Egypt, and seventeen years after anti-Armenian atrocities (because of Bahrām’s episode), the invitation of another Muslim Armenian military figure from the north on the Fāṭimid stage marked a developed stage in the history of Muslim Armenians.

Born in 1101/1102 in an Armenian family, Ṭalā'ī was from Persia (the region from the southeastern shores of Lake Van to Lake Urmia in the southeast). His birthplace is described as a "prosperous" city that is surrounded by fruit orchards, situated "five miles from the shores of Urmia, three days from Tabriz and three days from Dvin." According to the same source, the city was considered the birthplace of Zarathustra, the "prophet of the majūsīs" (Zoroastrians).²¹⁷ Since the fifth century, these parts south of Armenia and Persia were a haven for Armenian sectarians who collaborated with the local Shī'ī Muslims, and many also converted to Islam.

The Muslim Armenian Ruzzik clan or the Banū Ruzzik is the explicit case of such communities in this particular region. It suggests links between these converts and the Persian-speaking "tačiks" that Grigor Tat'ewac'i addresses at the end of the fourth century. It is possible to imagine that at least some of these so-called tajiks were Armenian converts to sub-Shī'ī sects. The Banū Ruzzik, for example, were Nuṣayris. In central Asia Minor, many Armenian sectarians gradually joined the Alewī sects, or the worshippers of the Prophet 'Alī. The most famous of these syncretistic sects were the Kurdish Truth Worshippers (Ahl i-Haqq or Alī Ilāhis), who were very closely connected (sometimes identified) with the Nuṣayrī Bekdashīs, and the Qizilbashīs.²¹⁸

It is said that growing interest in religion and the adoration of the Prophet 'Alī led young Ṭalā'ī away from his native province to seek the company of the ascetic and vagrant groups in tribal areas in the south. Following a discourse in defense of Imāmism and theories of predestination (*qadariyah*), he withdrew from all worldly affairs and indulged in the study of theology and Islamic Law or the Shari'ah.²¹⁹

His political career in Fātimid Egypt has often been connected with an extraordinary event, rather a legend that, according to his biographers, happened during his first pilgrimage to the Sanctuary of the Prophet Ibn Abī Ṭalīb in the Najaf with forty other *faqīrs* (ascetic poor men). The Imām of the shrine at the time was a man called al-Sayyid Ma'šūm. Since Ṭalā'ī and his fellow pilgrims were lodging there, the Prophet 'Alī was said to have appeared in a dream to Ibn Ma'šūm and told him that among the *faqīrs* there was someone called Ṭalā'ī Ruzzik, whom he considered one of his most faithful followers. "Tell him," said 'Alī, "to proceed to Egypt for we have decreed that he should rule there." As per the legend, following the oracle, Ṭalā'ī left for Egypt.

and, in fact, ruled over Egypt, but as vizier.²²⁰ However, before settling in Egypt, the clan of Banū Ruzzik stayed in al-Shām for a while. This is the background of Ṭalā'ī and the spiritual "justification" of his rule in Egypt, as he himself invented and most probably marketed.

The Banū Ruzzik were devout Nuṣayrīs, or radical Shī'ī Imāmīs. Al-Maqrīzī often makes references to the faith of Ṭalā'ī. He mentions that in addition to the holy places in Mecca and Medina, Ṭalā'ī made generous donations to Alewī sanctuaries.²²¹ A staunch defender of predestination and determinism, he was said—or claimed—to have powers of foresight into the future. "He used to see/read destiny" (*kāna yara al-qadar*), said al-Dhahabī.²²²

Similar to his ascent to power, his death also was communicated to him, as he claimed. It is said that on the 17th of Ramaḍān, which coincided with the anniversary of the death of the Prophet 'Alī, he performed a ceremonial prayer, and as he was mounting his horse to leave for the royal palace, his turban fell and was entangled. Despite this omen, he proceeded to the royal palace where he was fatally stabbed that same night and died the next day.²²³ His close friend and eulogist, the poet 'Umāra al-Yamanī relates that three days before his death, Ṭalā'ī showed him two verses he had written in anticipation of his end:

While we are oblivious and asleep, death has a vigilant eye and never sleeps/
Even though for years we passed through blazes, we wish to know when is the [final] blaze [death].²²⁴

The Ruzziks seem to have had missionary objectives. Some of Ṭalā'ī's verses are indeed written in a missionary spirit. 'Umāra was once told that Ṭalā'ī and the Banū Ruzzik intended to convert him and that these motives lay behind their excessive generosity toward him and others as well. However, as the poet explains, "deep rooted conviction" and knowledge of Sunnī Islam (he was a theologian and a qāḍī, Islamic judge) prevented him from being tempted. Eventually, Ṭalā'ī gave up attempts to convert his most eloquent admirer.²²⁵

Ibn al-Athīr referred to him as "Ṭalā'ī Ibn Ruzzik *al-armanī*, the Alewī vizier of al-Ādid and the lord [*ṣāhib*] of Egypt." In another context, he wrote, "Al-Ṣāliḥ was an Imāmī but in his beliefs he was different from the Egyptian Alewīs." As an Imāmī, Ṭalā'ī took neither the Fāṭimid doctrine of imāmate seriously, nor the importance of succession. He is said to have dismissed as sheer "ignorance" the

celebrations of the people of Cairo on the occasion of the proclamation of al-ʿĀdid as the new caliph-imām. Ibn al-Athīr describes this by saying that “those ignorant people fail to see that only a while ago I was inspecting them [the candidates for the caliphate] as one selects a sheep from the herd.”²²⁶

The Nuṣayrīs, named after their founder theologian Muḥammad Ibn Nuṣayr Nāmīrī ʿAbdī, were basically a radical Shīʿī sect who lived in the east of the Euphrates, and some lived in Egypt.²²⁷ Similarities of doctrines with the Armenian sunworshippers (*arewapašts*) suggest the possibility of links between them and the so-called *shamsiyah al-arman* or Armenian sunworshippers (in Arab sources) in Syria during the twelfth century. As discussed just now, Matthew of Edessa and Ibn al-Qalānīsī spoke of these militant factions, the former around the year 1125/519H in Menbij (northeast of Aleppo) and the latter, in 1160/555H in Damascus.²²⁸

With a few exceptions, most Muslim Armenians of these times, earlier as well as later on, seem to have had Shīʿī sympathies, and Ṭalāʾī was not an exception. There is a strong possibility that ʿAzīz al-Dawlah of Aleppo also had Nuṣayrī sympathies. According to an officer in his service, al-Qāʾid Abū Khayr al-Mufaḍḍal Ibn Saʿīd al-ʿAzīzī (who wrote a eulogy addressed to him), ʿAzīz held great festivities and fireworks on Christmas Eve (*laylat al-milād*) at the Citadel of Aleppo. Among the Muslim sects, only the Nuṣayrīs are known to have celebrated Christmas as one of their feasts. The piety of ʿAzīz, as praised by al-Maqrīzī, was probably a reference to his spirituality and zeal.²²⁹ The celebration of Christmas could not be considered an indication of Sunnī or Shīʿī orthodoxy. Indeed, in the province of Aleppo, the Nuṣayrīs flourished during the reign of the Ḥamdānids in the early years of the eleventh century, and they dispersed after the Mirdāsids took over.

While the Cilicians allied with the incoming Crusaders, the heterodox and sectarian Armenians in Upper Mesopotamia and al-Shām invariably fought against them and allied with the Muslims, Arabs, and Turks. The Banū Ruzzik and other Nuṣayrī clans such as Banū Muḥriz, Banū Sulayḥah, and Banū ʿAmrūn also fought against the Crusaders.²³⁰ The profound hatred and enmity that Ṭalāʾī held against the Crusaders, his few attempts to recover Fāṭimid territories lost to them, his correspondence, and relatively good relations with Zankī Nūr ed-Dīn are reasons to believe that the clan had some history in north Syria before moving to Egypt. A small incident was narrated earlier.

We know of five members of the Banū Ruzzik who were a part of Ṭalā'ī's administration: his two sons Majd al-Islām Abū Shujā' Ruzzik (future vizier of al-Ādid, known as *al-Malik al-Ādil*) and Jalāl al-Islām, his brother al-Amīr Fāris al-Muslimīn Badr Ibn Ruzzik, Sayf ed-Dīn al-Ḥusayn, who was his nephew (brother's son) and son-in-law,²³¹ and 'Izz ed-Dīn Ḥusām, another nephew (his sister's son). Ṭalā'ī devoted some verses to his clan.²³² Al-Amīr Ṣubḥ al-Mufaḍḍal, a son of al-Afḍal Shāhanshāh, was closely associated with and related to the Banū Ruzzik. He was an officer in the Barqiyah troops and had a palace in their district. Ṣubḥ married a daughter of Sayf ed-Dīn Ḥusayn, the son-in-law of Ṭalā'ī. In other words, Ṣubḥ's wife was Ṭalā'ī's granddaughter; thus, a grandson of Badr married a granddaughter of Ṭalā'ī. When Dirghām liquidated the Barqiyah officers, Ṣubḥ was among the victims along with others from the Banū Ruzzik.

Ṭalā'ī's fanatical allegiance to his Nuṣayrism and his political career constituted a unity, which found expression in his poetry. Clues to his political personality are often found in his poems, most of which are lost. Ibn Khalikān reported seeing two volumes or *Dīwāns* of his verses "on all matters and issues." What is left is gathered from scattered sources.²³³ A flamboyant personality and a fanatic, Ṭalā'ī saw his political career as an extension and translation of his devotion to the legacy of the Prophet 'Alī and his "Pure Family" (*al-'itra al-tāhirah*). A great number of his verses are in praise of 'Alī and his mystical attachment to the defense of radical Imāmism.²³⁴ To this category of verses also belong his more theological verses about Islam, corruption, and the origination of sects as a consequence.²³⁵

At least ideally, holy war or jihād against the Crusaders was presented as the focus of Ṭalā'ī's career. Well aware of the fact that his minor military victories were only limited operations, he sent messages in verse to Nūr ed-Dīn Zankī through his friend and admirer the poet Usāmah or al-Amīr Mu'ayyid al-Dawlah Abū Muẓaffar Usāmah Ibn Murshid al-Kinānī al-Shayzarī Ibn Munqidh (1095–1188). The record of their correspondence is found in the *dīwān* of both figures. Ṭalā'ī also wrote love poems (dedicated mostly to youths) and many aphorisms of ascetic-moralistic content.²³⁶

A very strict and ruthless man, Ṭalā'ī restored some internal order in the country, and avenged the enemies of the caliphate. However, his heavy taxation policy on the peasantry, his monopoly over the state resources, and deprivation of the amīrs of all benefits, above all, his

severity in dealing with the royal family, created discontentment. In 1159/554H, he crushed a rebellion led by the Ghuzz Bahrām—who was a rival for the position of the vizierate—and a certain schismatic figure known as Yūsuf al-Khārijī in al-Ša‘īd, south of Cairo and north of Upper Egypt.²³⁷ General amnesty was granted to the rebels, but two years later, in September 1161, another rebellion was crushed by Ṭalā’ī’s brother, Fāris al-Muslimīn al-Amīr Badr Ibn Ruzzīk. Bahrām was crucified, and Yūsuf al-Khārijī was decapitated.²³⁸ About the same time of Ghuzz Bahrām’s first revolt in 1159, Ṭalā’ī was challenged by the governor of Alexandria ‘Izz ed-Dīn Tarkhān Salīṭ, who was originally from Khurasān, but the attempt failed.²³⁹ The provinces of the Gharbiyah and the Buḥayrah were recovered, and Tarkhān was executed.

The foreign and military policies of the Banū Ruzzīk concentrated on keeping the Crusaders out of Egypt. Before their arrival to power, in 1153/548H, ‘Akkā was lost to them. In 1156/551H, Ṭalā’ī led two expeditions to ‘Akkā and Ghazzah and in 1158/553H, his general Dirghām carried out a successful campaign against the Crusaders in Ghazzah and al-Khalīl/Hebron.²⁴⁰ During the same year, realizing the impossibility of forcing the Frankish forces out of the region and the urgent need for a collective strategy with the Zankīs, Ṭalā’ī sent repeated pleas to Nūr ed-Dīn to form a military alliance. He undertook to reconcile the latter with Giliĵ/Kilij Arslān, inviting them to unite against the “infidels” on Muslim land.²⁴¹ He also sent letters in verse to his friend Usāmah Ibn Munqidh, who was in the service of Nūr ed-Dīn at the time. He wrote,

Pigs and evil spirits have settled in the Holy City, if Christ, to whom they claim to serve, were to see their deeds he would have denounced them, for they are the farthest removed from the worship of their crucified Lord.²⁴²

In Syria, Nūr ed-Dīn had his own reasons not to respond to Ṭalā’ī’s pleas. Similar to most Sunnī Muslims, he considered the Fāṭimid Caliphate a dissident state anyway and would do nothing to promote their reputation as devout Muslims. Furthermore, he cherished the old Turkish dream of annexing Egypt to the Syrian Seljuk kingdom. Had it not been for the arrival of Badr in 1074/466H, Egypt might well have fallen to them. In the person of Ṭalā’ī, another Armenian vizier was an obstacle before Seljuk penetration. Indeed, less than two years

after Ṭalā'ī's death, the Fāṭimid Caliphate was brought to a virtual standstill through Shāwar and Dirghām until its final demise to the Kurdish Ayyūbids nine years later.

By 1159, Ṭalā'ī had become less idealistic and adopted more pragmatic and defensive policies. He managed to keep the Crusaders and the Turks out by huge yearly tributes. Between 1159 and 1160, he built the great brick fortifications in Bilbays.²⁴³ The project cost him more than 200,000 dinārs.²⁴⁴ His personal troops were called the *Barqiyah*; they lived in a special district known as *Ḥārat al-Barqiyah*. His ghulāms inhabited a special quarter known as *Ḥārat al-Ṣālihiyah*.²⁴⁵

Universal jihād was impossible in view of Seljuk political objectives in the region. All the same, Ṭalā'ī always saw himself as some sort of a legendary knight in defense of radical Imāmism.²⁴⁶ In this respect, he was clearly distinguishable from the Jamālīs, who were essentially statesmen with not many doctrinal scruples. However, for Ṭalā'ī, jihād against the Crusaders was the ideal career for a pious Muslim leader. After minor victories between 1156/551H and 1159/554H, he was disillusioned. In the summer of 1060/555H, the Crusaders reached al-'Arīsh and were stopped only after negotiations. The outcome was a yearly tribute of 160,000 dinārs. After the death of the adolescent caliph al-Fā'iz (July 1160/Rajab 555) in one of his epileptic seizures, Ṭalā'ī raised a nine-year-old grandson of al-Ḥāfiẓ and a cousin of al-Fā'iz, Abū Muḥammad 'Abd Allāh Ibn Yūsuf, as Caliph al-'Ādid li-Dīn Allāh, to whom he got his daughter married.²⁴⁷ Al-'Ādid, the last Fāṭimid caliph, was the fourteenth Fāṭimid Imām. Much later, al-'Ādid appointed his son Dāwūd as his "heir apparent," whom the Ḥāfiẓīs recognized as their imām al-Ḥamīd l'Illāh.²⁴⁸

Ṭalā'ī concluded his political career on his deathbed with three regrets: The first was the building of the Mosque of al-Ṣāliḥ outside the Zuwaylāh Gate and the walls of Cairo. The second was the appointment of the Kurdish Shāwar as governor of Upper Egypt, and in this context, he warned his son Ruzzīk against this man. Not only Ruzzīk but also the Fāṭimid Caliphate perished at his hands. The last regret was concentration on the defensive fortifications of Bilbays instead of the liberation of Jerusalem.²⁴⁹

In his description of the tragic death of Ṭalā'ī (allegedly by a Baṭīnī, like al-Afḍal's killer),²⁵⁰ 'Umāra narrates that he was constantly involved in theological and literary studies, but still closely followed the affairs of the state and regularly met with his officers regarding military matters.

Circumstances were sometimes to his advantage and at other times, against him. It was his excessive adherence to his sect (*madhhab*) that led him to indulge in debates. Similar to most Fāṭimids in his position, and according to 'Umāra, Ṭalā'ī, in turn, loved luxury.²⁵¹ Rivalries and, more importantly, the "restrictions he put on the royal harem . . . earned him the hatred of the caliph's aunt." The intrigues of this lady accelerated the plot against his life. Fatally wounded and before closing his eyes, Ṭalā'ī ordered her execution in his presence. Earlier, another aunt of al-Ādid (an elder sister of al-Zāfir) had organized an abortive attempt against his life and was, in turn, punished. Ṭalā'ī died on September 12, 1161/Ramaḍān 20, 556H.²⁵²

The friendship between Ṭalā'ī and Usāmah Ibn Munqidh (b. 1095) has produced interesting literature. In his famous autobiographical work *Kitāb al-I'tibār* (Book of Consideration), Usāmah gives valuable information about Ṭalā'ī. He says that their friendship started from the day he arrived in Egypt on November 30, 1144/Jumādah 11, 539. He was then almost fifty, and Ṭalā'ī was in his early forties. Usāmah was the guest of honor of the caliph al-Ḥāfiẓ, who accommodated him in one of the lavish palaces of al-Afḍal Shāhanshāh.²⁵³ Ten years later, after the murder of Caliph al-Zāfir and the liquidation of other sons of al-Ḥāfiẓ by vizier 'Abbās and his son Naṣr, the army rose against 'Abbās. As the latter was preparing to flee to Syria, Ṭalā'ī, who was not yet appointed vizier but was in contact with the royal family, sent a message to Usāmah, who reported it as follows, as translated by P. Hitti:

'Abbās is incapable of staying in Egypt any longer; he is in fact about to leave for al-Shām and I now rule over the land, you know what exists between me and you, so do not depart with him, for as you are needed there, he will compel you to leave, I conjure you by God not to accompany him, because you are my partner in everything good that I may attain.²⁵⁴

On his part, 'Abbās was aware of the intimate relationship between the two and took measures to separate them.²⁵⁵ Usāmah left Cairo but as the convoy arrived in Bilbays, he found it impossible to proceed with his family and sent them back to Ṭalā'ī. The latter took care of them and saw to their needs.²⁵⁶ In Syria, Usāmah entered the service of Nūr ed-Dīn and during the same year, he asked Ṭalā'ī to send his family (in Cairo) to Damascus, but Ṭalā'ī refused. Instead, Ṭalā'ī asked Usāmah to return to Egypt through Mecca, if necessary, and offered him the

governorship of Aswān in Upper Egypt on the frontiers between the Muslim state and the Abyssinians.²⁵⁷ For the second time, Usāmah was prevented from joining his friend Ṭalā'ī, because Nūr ed-Dīn wanted to expand into Egypt and did not want to see Ṭalā'ī in a position of power. On a promise by the Franks to guarantee safe passage for Usāmah's family, Ṭalā'ī sent them from Dumyāt on one of his private ships laden with gifts that were worth more than 30,000 dinārs. The small fortune was confiscated by the Crusaders, and Usāmah's precious collection of four thousand rare books was lost.²⁵⁸

Literary tastes and probably Nuṣayrism brought these two figures together, but there also exists the possibility that a previous acquaintance of their clans in Syria underlay their friendship. I could find no record to support this possibility. There is indeed a hypothesis about the Nuṣayrism or the "secret" faith of Usāmah. He may have been a Shī'ī, judging from his admiration of 'Alī, his service to the Fāṭimids, and friendship with the Imāmī Ruzzīks. He may have not advertised his true faith, but P. Cobb quotes a passage from a lost Shī'ī history by an eyewitness who names Usāmāh as a Shī'ī, who, however, concealed his true faith.

Yaḥyā Ibn Ṭayy mentions [Usāmah] in his *History of the Shī'ites*, saying: 'My father related to me the following: I met him a number of times. He was an Imāmī Shī'ite, sound in his beliefs except that he used to conceal his orientation and exhibit *taqiyyah*. He had abundant wealth and he used to help out the Shī'ites, being kind to the poor and giving to the notables.'²⁵⁹

As of the mid-tenth century, Shayzar and the whole valley of the Orontes received Armenians from the north. There were also large Nuṣayrī communities in the same area. In his autobiography, Usāmah makes three references to the Armenians in Shayzar, his native district. In the first reference, these Armenians were said to be knights associated with the Crusaders.²⁶⁰ Usāmah's father, who had no political ambitions and spent his time hunting and reading and copying the Qur'ān, had good relations with the Armenian lords of Adana, Antartus, and Durūb. He exchanged goods in return for a choice of Armenian falcons and falconers.²⁶¹ There were also Armenians from Cilicia. In another context, Usāmah spoke of "twenty footmen of Armenian troops who were good archers."²⁶² This is clearly a different category that is distinct from the falconers. The archery and militancy

of these Armenians, in addition to living and hunting among Muslims, strongly suggest a heterodox background that is reminiscent of the world of *Digenis Akritis*.

2. *Abū Shujāʿ Badr ed-Dīn, al-Nāṣir Muḥyī ed-Dīn Majd al-Islām Ruzzīk Ibn Ṭalāʾi*—(1161–1162)

Ruzzīk Ibn Ṭalāʾi was brought up as a military man.²⁶³ During his father's vizierate, he was commander in chief of the army. Hours before his death, Ṭalāʾi proclaimed him vizier with the honorary title of "al-Malik al-ʿĀdil al-Nāṣir."²⁶⁴ This seventh (or the eighth, also counting Sharaf al-Maʿālī Ibn al-Afḍal) and last Armenian vizier stayed in office for only fifteen months. At the instigation and with the cooperation of Caliph al-ʿĀdid and the royal household, Ruzzīk was ousted by Shāwar, the governor of al-Ṣaʿīd, on December 19, 1162/Muḥarram 18, 558.²⁶⁵

According to Ibn Taghrī Birdī, Ruzzīk succeeded his father in good management and just rule, but Caliph al-ʿĀdid did not seem to be able to tolerate the condition of powerlessness. He collaborated with Shāwar Ibn Mujīr against Ruzzīk.²⁶⁶ Shāwar gathered a "mob" of "rogues" from the "negroes" of al-Ṣaʿīd (*awbāsh al-Ṣaʿīd min al-ʿabīd waʾl-awghād*), he adds, and advanced toward Cairo. The rabble destroyed the ministerial palaces and the houses of Banū Ruzzīk.²⁶⁷ "With the annihilation of the state of Banū Ruzzīk, said ʿUmāra, the Egyptian state fell."²⁶⁸ During the next eight or nine years, the caliphate eroded at the hands of Kurdish Shāwar, Dirghām, Shīrkūh, and Ṣalāḥ ed-Dīn.

The poet ʿUmāra, the main source for the short but extremely complicated career of Ruzzīk Ibn Ṭalāʾi, reveals that Ruzzīk was "preparing to make a radical return to orthodox Sunnism," as another form of "dissidence" or *rafḍ* against the Fāṭimid Ismāʿīlī state. Under constant and tremendous threats, both internal and external, he may have wanted to pacify Nūr ed-Dīn by removing Sunnī objections to Fāṭimid opposition to the ʿAbbāsids. ʿUmāra also relates that Ruzzīk invited prominent Sunnī figures and theologians to the palace, one such figure being the Shāfiʿī jurist, judge, and man of letters al-Qāḍī al-Ajall al-Fāḍil Abū ʿAlī ʿAbd al-Raḥīm Ibn ʿAlī Ibn al-Baysānī.²⁶⁹ ʿUmāra himself remained a qāḍī till the end of 1162,²⁷⁰ and in Ruzzīk's return to Islamic "orthodoxy," he saw a great advantage for the country.²⁷¹

In general, ʿUmāra had a very high opinion of Ruzzīk's statesmanship and benevolence toward the common people. He was said to have relieved the poor of heavy taxes and debts.²⁷² Ruzzīk was not "stingy,"

though "his father was more generous," he said. Similar to his father, and incidentally the other Muslim Armenian viziers and figures, Ruzzik also loved poetry, and made sure that his deeds were recorded in poems.²⁷³ 'Umāra himself dedicated many verses to Ruzzik. Some of these verses were in praise of his character, whereas others expressed his gratitude for the gifts he received.²⁷⁴ He spoke of military victories, one over Bahrām the Ghuzz,²⁷⁵ another over the Nizāris, and so on.²⁷⁶ The Ruzzik clan, in turn, inspired 'Umāra to write in praise of their solidarity (as "five fingers on a hand"), their generosity, piety, and love of knowledge.²⁷⁷ On the occasion of the marriage of Ṭalā'i's daughter to caliph al-Ādid, an event that marked the merger of two families, as always, 'Umāra was generously rewarded for a poem he wrote.²⁷⁸

Some months after the proclamation of Ruzzik as vizier, on February 7, the remains of Ṭalā'i *al-shahīd* (the martyr) were taken to a special mausoleum (*mashhad*) in the cemetery amid great mourning in Cairo and Fustāṭ. This second burial was a "victory for the Banū Ruzzik," wrote 'Umāra.²⁷⁹ In a sense, the rule of Banū Ruzzik through Ruzzik the son and the last of the clan was reestablished at a popular level. However, the sympathy of the populace for the Ruzziks was an asset of minor significance. Ruzzik inherited from his father problems that had at different times caused great upheavals and threatened the state. He had to encounter the constant threat of Frankish invasions and Sunnī-Seljuk expansion through the Turkmen and Kurdish sympathizers in Egypt. On the home front, Ruzzik was left alone with his clan to deal with the claims of the Nizāris, the rivals for the vizierate, and the intrigues of the adolescent Caliph al-Ādid and his household against him.

As robes of honor were being distributed to the supporters of the Ruzziks (such as 'Alī Ibn al-Zubd and 'Umāra) on the occasion of the anniversary of Ṭalā'i's death, Cairo was under the threat of an invasion by the Crusaders. They began moving from Ghazzah and 'Akkā toward al-'Arīsh in the Sinai. An Egyptian contingent under Dirghām was dispatched to Bilbays and al-'Urūq. Being inferior in numbers and preparation, the Fāṭimid troops withdrew and surprised the enemy from behind. Inundations hampered further advances, and Crusader armies returned to the east. The Egyptians celebrated a victory, and²⁸⁰ 'Umāra wrote a poem in commemoration.²⁸¹ However, Ruzzik was still under threat and pressure to pay the Franks their annual tribute of 160,000 dinārs. He had inherited an insoluble problem from al-Afḍal's times: the hostility of Nizārī Ismā'īlis.

On August 13, a large force landed on the coast of western Egypt, coming from the Maghrib. It was led by a man who claimed to be Nizār's son and was called Abū 'Abdallāh al-Ḥusayn Ibn Nizār Ibn al-Mustanşir, the "lawful" heir to his grandfather's throne.²⁸² Since Nizār's death, and despite the hostilities and threats of the Nizārī Assassins of Alamūt everywhere, this faction was left out of the caliphate. Ruzzik entrusted his cousin (a son of Ṭalā'i's sister) 'Izz ed-Dīn Ḥusām with the task of dealing with the intruders. On a previous occasion, 'Izz ed-Dīn had succeeded in dealing with the rebellion of Ṭarkhān Salīṭ, a rival for the vizierate. On August 14, 1162/557H, both the rebels and the instigators were brought to Ruzzik, and Ibn Nizār was executed by orders from caliph al-Ādid.²⁸³ 'Umāra called this conquest a "victory of victories," comparing it with the rebellions of Rukn ed-dīn 'Abbās in 1154/549H, and Yūsuf al-Khārijī and Bahrām al-Ghuzz in 1161/556–557.²⁸⁴

A few weeks after the Nizārī uprising, and as the Fāṭimid armies were involved in confrontations with Amaury's armies at Bilbays in the east, another revolt broke out, centered around al-Maḥallah, in the region of al-Gharbiyah in Lower Egypt. This time, the "agitators were from inside and outside" the country, as Derenbourg put it.²⁸⁵ Sayf ed-Dīn al-Ḥusayn, Ruzzik's brother-in-law, and al-Amīr Ṭāhir Murtafi' Ibn Faḥl—known as al-Hilwās—a Barqiyah officer and a part of the Ruzzik clan since the time of Ṭalā'i, led the expedition against the rebels. By September 12, the Gharbiyah was recovered, and Ruzzik's victorious troops returned to Cairo. The insurrectionists tried to start another movement in the region of the Ābār and Jazīrat Banī Naşr, but there also, the rebellion was dealt with by an old friend of the family, the governor of the province Tāj al-Khilāfah Ward, a lieutenant of Ṭalā'i.²⁸⁶ 'Alī Ibn al-Zubd, a friend of the Ruzziks and a fanatical Nuşayrī, was appointed as governor of Maḥallah at the end of September.²⁸⁷ To reduce the efficacy of his rivals and aspirers to the vizierate, Ruzzik started promoting and then removing the strong figures in his administration with the aim of clearing the capital of their influence. In the meantime, and on his part, al-Ādid was following an identical policy. He was involved in negotiations that aimed at getting rid of the Banū Ruzziks altogether.

Eventually, Ruzzik gave up under tremendous pressure from all sides and depended only on his two relatives, 'Izz ed-Dīn Ḥusām and Sayf ed-Dīn al-Ḥusayn. The former warned him against Shāwar, his greatest enemy, and the latter tried to persuade him to follow his father's

advice and avoid direct confrontation. However, Ruzzik chose a more aggressive policy. Instead of allowing Shāwar semi-independence in al-Ṣaʿīd, he challenged him. According to the anonymous author of the continuation of the *History of the Patriarchs of Alexandria*, the policy eventually led to the downfall of both the Ruzziks and the caliphate.²⁸⁸

After a first defeat at the Battle of al-Daljah in Ashmunayn in October 1162/Shawwāl 557H, Shāwar disappeared and then reappeared on December 10. As Ruzzik approached Cairo, Sayf ed-Din Ḥusayn and ʿIzz. ed-Dīn Ḥusām deserted him. The latter fled and ended up in Ḥamāh in central Syria, where he bought estates and settled.²⁸⁹ Abandoned by his closest relatives and associates, Ruzzik left Cairo on December 28, 1162. The houses and properties of the family were plundered by the Sudanese. The anonymous author of the continuation of the *History of the Patriarchs* relates that as danger approached, mysterious voices were heard around the palaces of Banū Ruzzik (who were leaving through the gates of Cairo separately) urging them to escape and that it was found out that these were “voices of angels.”²⁹⁰ According to the same source, Ruzzik left through the Zuwaylah Gate, taking with him two small sacks of gold and precious stones. He fell amid an Arab tribe whose chief was known as Yaʿqūb Ibn al-Nīs al-Lakhmī, who returned him to the palace. At first, Shāwar treated him well, but on rumors that Ruzzik’s brother, Jalāl al-Islām was preparing a counter attack to recover the vizierate, Ṭayy Ibn Shāwar decapitated Ruzzik on August 23, 1163.²⁹¹ ʿUmāra narrates that he saw Ruzzik’s head on a platter in the “Hall of Secrets” (*qāʿat al-asrār*) placed before Ṭayy, Shāwar, Dirghām, Murtafiʿ al-Zāhir, and other amīrs of the Ministerial Palace. Shocked at the sight, when he wanted to leave, Shāwar told him that if left alive, Ruzzik would have done the same to them and spared no one.²⁹² In general, Ruzzik was the victim of accumulated problems that were characteristic of an ailing kingdom and during his very short term of fifteen months in office, he probably did his best but failed to cast a cultural shadow, like his predecessors.

3. Other Figures—Two Karakūshs

During the last decades of the Fāṭimid Caliphate and the early decades of the Ayyūbids, we find two more *rūmīs* or Christians. Both were mamlūks, and nicknamed “Karakūsh.” The word means blackbird in Turkish, and it is also used to mean owl and/or bearer of bad news. Some consider the word an Arabized form of the Armenian name

Kirakos. The first and the more important of these two, Bahā' ed-Dīn 'Abdallāh al-Asadī al-Rūmī al-Mālikī al-Nāşirī (d. 1201) was an officer of Şalāḥ ed-Dīn. The second was Sharaf ed-Dīn al-Armanī al-Muẓaffarī al-Nāşirī al-Ghuzzī al-Taḡawī (d. 1212). The Armenian identity of the first is granted by some but not established.²⁹³ The second is Armenian as indicated by his name.

Bahā' ed-Dīn Karakūsh was a eunuch and mamlūk of Kurdish Zankī Asad ed-Dīn Şīrkūh.²⁹⁴ He was an amir and played an important role in the appointment of Şalāḥ ed-Dīn as vizier to succeed his uncle Şīrkūh (who died after two months in office in March 1169/565H). He occupied many positions, such as chamberlain for the royal family after al-'Ādid's death, and regent for the heir of Şalāḥ ed-Dīn. He was the latter's closest advisor and friend. Indeed, when he was captured by the Franks in 'Akkā around 1191/587H (where he was sent to fortify the city), his master paid a ransom of 20,000 dinārs and rescued him about two years later. Karakūsh was also a famous builder. The citadel of Cairo, the third reconstruction of the walls (that included Cairo and Fuṣṭāt), the bridge of Guīzah, and Şalāḥ ed-Dīn's palaces are some of his best-known works.

The severity of his character must have gained Karakūsh some enemies, one of whom was Ibn Mammātī, who wrote a pamphlet called *Kitāb al-Faṣūṣh fī Aḥkām Karakūsh* (a book on the stupidity of the decisions-judgments of Karakūsh).²⁹⁵

The other Karakūsh, or Sharaf ed-Dīn al-Armanī al-Muẓaffarī al-Nāşirī al-Taḡawī and al-Ghuzzī, was one of the most notorious figures of the 1170s. A mamlūk of Şalāḥ ed-Dīn's nephew al-Malik al-Muẓaffar Taḡiyy ed-Dīn, he was involved in military operations in Tunisia and Libya. Imprisoned for a while by Şalāḥ ed-Dīn, and after his release, Karakūsh returned to Libya in 1176/1177, but after renewed violent acts, he was executed in 1212. "Thus there came to an end the life of an adventurer who had carried on warfare for forty years as much for Şalāḥ ed-Dīn's benefit as for his own." It is said that some of his sons remained in the same region and perished there.²⁹⁶ In North Africa and during these decades, Armenian sources often refer to a certain Kirakos, who may very well be this Sharaf ed-Dīn Karakūsh.

In conclusion to this section, a few observations are in order related to the Muslim Armenians of Egypt during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Whatever the perspectives on the Armenian Period in

Fāṭimid Egypt, it is generally accepted that the involvement of Badr and heterodox Armenians in Fāṭimid politics from 1074 till the death of Ruzzīk Ibn Ṭalā'ī in 1163 provided Egypt a period of prosperity, kept the Seljuks and the Crusaders out, and, more importantly, granted the caliphate almost one more century. The death of the last Armenian vizier marked the start of events that led to the downfall of the Fāṭimid state at the hands of the Kurds and their Turkish allies.

There is a very basic difference in the way in which the Armenians, Seljuks, and Kurds approached the subject of a strong and stable Fāṭimid state in Egypt. The Seljuks regarded the entire region from al-Shām to Egypt as a land to be conquered and the people to be subjugated, whereas the Armenians worked for the reenforcement of the existing structures not as invaders but as immigrants with a natural interest in their maintenance and improvement. The heterodox and mostly Muslim Armenians who came with Badr, as well as the others belonging to various backgrounds, seemed to have easily adapted themselves to the new environment and made an effort to be accepted. No complaint of any sort was ever recorded against the Jamālīs and their Armenians or the Ruzzīks and their men. On the contrary, they were lavishly praised for their contribution and just rule by most medieval Muslim sources, both contemporary and modern. Even Yānis al-Armanī, the most modest among the viziers, was held in high esteem. The case of Bahrām was indeed a contrary paradigm, an anticlimax. He arrived with the clear intention of "conquering the enemies," as his nephew Nersēs Šnorhali put it. The two-year term of Bahrām achieved only anti-Armenian atrocities that were unprecedented. However, less than two decades later, another Armenian, Ṭalā'ī was invited to bring order and punish trespassers. The persecutions of the Armenians were renewed by the Ayyūbids, who obviously wanted to replace the Armenian element in the administration. Otherwise, the radicalism of Ṣalāḥ ed-Dīn addressed not only the Christians but also all the non-Sunnīs.

The competence of the Muslim Armenian viziers and their success in restoring and running the ailing Fāṭimid state have been repeatedly discussed by most Arab historians. They were enlightened egoists, Hobbesians, who saw their own strength and survival in the prosperity of the country they inhabited. Almost without exception, these viziers were strict and ruthless disciplinarians and just administrators, because a tight discipline and a broad social justice were essential to

insure a legitimacy in a society not their own. To this end, and strangely, even the common individuals were identified as "Armenians."

Religious tolerance was another tool that was used to gain legitimacy. The reduction of Fāṭimid rituals by Badr was a reflection of the diminished position of the caliph, but otherwise, it gained the confidence of the majority of the Sunnī and Christian Egyptians. Gaining the support of these communities was essential. At any rate, the more liberal the society, the easier it would be for these Armenians to integrate their community. The often-mentioned fairness and justice of the Armenian viziers toward all denominations is to be understood in this context. Furthermore, irrespective of their motives, the internal policies of these figures proved to be more beneficial for the caliphate itself and more altruistic in their consequences than any other socio-military faction could achieve.

In 1169, Sunnī Ṣalāḥ ed-Dīn was proclaimed vizier to al-ʿĀdid²⁹⁷ and in 1171, the caliphate that he considered dissident or *rāfiḍ* was destroyed by him and his Kurdish and Turkish associates. This was the first phase of his plan. Similar to Zankī Nūr ed-Dīn, he also regarded the Fāṭimids as the descendants of the Majūsī and the Jews. Consequently, according to him, the Fāṭimids were in no position to claim any relation to the Prophet and should not be allowed to have a leading position in the Islamic Ummah.²⁹⁸ Ṣalāḥ ed-Dīn closed the Mosque of al-Ḥākim and al-Azhar and it was only a century later, at the time of the Mamlūks, that it was reopened.²⁹⁹ As the Chief Judge and Head of the Missionaries, vizier Ṣalāḥ ed-Dīn expelled the Shīʿī jurists and canceled the Shīʿī peculiarities from the prayers.³⁰⁰ Instead, the name of Turkish Zankī Nūr ed-Dīn was mentioned in the khuṭbah after that of al-ʿĀdid.³⁰¹

In general, the Fāṭimids were more liberal and tolerant toward others, as also pointed out by al-Qalqashandī.³⁰² The Armenian viziers were aware of the complications, and maneuvered for the benefit of both the state and themselves, as just mentioned. While Badr, al-Afḍal, and even Imāmī Kutayfāt allowed all the Islamic schools to function, Ṣalāḥ ed-Dīn allowed only the Shāfiʿī and Mālikī schools to function. Kutayfāt appointed four judges, two Sunnīs and two Shīʿīs, and Badr allowed the Sunnīs to apply their own laws of inheritance; whereas during Ṣalāḥ ed-Dīn's term, theological schools were opened for the teaching of Sunnī Islam.³⁰³ Al-Maqrīzī speaks of popular revolts conducted against these measures.³⁰⁴ At the administrative level, Ṣalāḥ

ed-Dīn reduced the staff of the palace, put restrictions on the royal family, and deprived the caliph of all possessions. He was said to have brought more evils on the Fāṭimids than the Franks ever did.³⁰⁵ He initiated persecutions against minorities and, in particular, the Sudanese and the Armenians.³⁰⁶ On September 1171/567H, the name of the 'Abbāsīd caliph replaced that of al-'Ādīd in the *khutbah* as a grave sign of the end of the dynasty.³⁰⁷ In the manner of Badr's liquidation of the Turkish amīrs, Ṣalāḥ ed-Dīn's compatriots and the Ghuzz murdered the Egyptian amīrs in a single day and divided their possessions as their *iqṭā'*. According to al-Maqrīzī, Ṣalāḥ ed-Dīn's men used to confiscate private homes and properties at will, and the people of Cairo greatly suffered under their atrocities.³⁰⁸

There are different accounts of the real causes of al-'Ādīd's death, in most of which Ṣalāḥ ed-Dīn played a role.³⁰⁹ Al-'Ādīd was hardly twenty-one years old when he died. By his death, "the greatest religious-political and cultural success of Shī'ī Islam" through the Fāṭimid Caliphate came to a close after 262 years (909–1171).³¹⁰ It was a strange coincidence that the last caliph was called *al-'Ādīd*, meaning breaker. His death also coincided with that of al-Ḥusayn or 'Āshūrā.³¹¹ Ṭalā'ī would have seen divine providence in these coincidences. Three years later, in 1174, after Nūr ed-Dīn's death, Ṣalāḥ ed-Dīn was independent and founded the Ayyūbid dynasty. One of the few last reports about the Armenians in the Fāṭimid period is about the Armenian guards or the *ktričs* of the royal palace who perished in the fire that destroyed the buildings, and the departure of the Anonymous Patriarch of Itfīḥ to Jerusalem in 1173.

In Armenian histories, the Armenian Period in Fāṭimid Egypt is left in total obscurity as a consequence of fixed criteria of orthodoxy and heresy, correct and incorrect images of Armenians. The unique cultural-political experience of Armenian heterodox factions in the Islamic world has not been duly studied. Dismissed as "heretical" or "degenerate," the spirituality of these Armenians was beyond doctrinal purity; it was often a zeal that found its expression in a violent yet fair sense of justice and power. Their ethnic identity, in turn, was a peculiar loyalty that was beyond the loyalties to language and faith. The inclusion and the study of the experience and long history of these forgotten Armenians of Fāṭimid Egypt will mean the completion of a panorama of mutually explanatory elements of the same broad historical expanse.

IV. The Testimony of Architecture

A. The Frescos of the White Monastery—Links between the Armenian North and the South

The study of the Armenian churches in Egypt during the eleventh and twelfth centuries will undoubtedly contribute to the study of the culture and distribution of Armenians in various parts of the country at the time. In addition to Abū Ṣāliḥ, Abū'l-Ḥusayn 'Alī Ibn Muḥammad al-Shabushtī, Abū Bakr Muḥammad al-Khālidi, Abū 'Uthmān Sa'd al-Khālidi, Abu'l-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī, Sa'id Ibn al-Bitrīq, al-Maqrīzī, and others have written on the subject of the Christian churches and monasteries.³¹²

The originality and accuracy of Abū Ṣāliḥ's work are questionable, but his Armenian descent seems to be established. Even though the book is a loosely organized collection of notes put together by a scribe, the eyewitness accounts mentioned in it are of great value. The introductory section would have been very interesting for our study, as it was devoted to Armenians, but the first twenty-two pages of the manuscript being lost, the section is incomplete. Of what is available and based on other sources, it is clear that the so-called Armenian churches initially belonged to the Copts, but were transferred to or taken by the Armenians, who often renovated and expanded them. After the persecutions of the Armenians by Ṣalāḥ ed-Dīn and then the Mamlūks, the Armenian community dispersed, and the churches were either abandoned or given back to the Copts. It is very common to find typical Armenian motives, architectural styles, bell towers, domes, icons, frescos, and inscriptions in the Coptic churches and monasteries of Egypt.

A partially studied detail in the broad and poorly researched field of Armenian churches in Egypt stands as a testimony and links the Armenians in the home land to those in al-Shām and Egypt during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. This is a group of three inscriptions in a fresco over the main altar of the church at the White Monastery (for its white stones), in Upper Egypt. The White Monastery is one of the two monasteries situated in the southwest of the city of Suhāj (Sohag) in the province of Asyūṭ not far from Akhmīm. The other is the Red Monastery (for its red brick walls). The frescos of the great church of the White Monastery are in relatively good condition,³¹³ because the plaster base was prepared at a much later period than the wall.

A. Kardashian, who visited the monastery, has a detailed description of this fresco.³¹⁴

Christ is depicted seated on a central throne, blessing with his right hand and holding the Bible with his left. Around him are the four evangelists and their symbolic signs, the Holy Virgin, the apostles, and other ornamentations that are typical of medieval Armenian miniatures. On both sides of Christ are the usual Armenian initials (“ՅՄ” or “YS” for *Yisus*, and “ԽՄ” or “KS” for *Kristos*); on top of “YS” and beneath “KS” are the initials in Greek. The name of Grigoris appears next to the image of Christ; the first catholicos of the Armenians of Egypt is written as “Tēr [Lord] Grigoris Kat’oḡikos.” There are two boxes in white on each side of the great fresco, and on these are three groups of inscriptions, which are fifty-four words on thirty-three lines. They are arranged as follows:

T’eodoros, painter and scribe from the province of Kesun, near the bridge of Shenjē from the village of Maxt’ellē / My father [is] a stone mason named Kristapor, God bless him and you and us all the Armenians that are [held] in slavery in Egypt - This work was completed during the patriarchate of Father Grigor, *k’urordi* [sister’s son] of Grigoris who is called Father Vahram.

Christ, spreader of light have mercy on [me] the *metat*, Xač’atur.

Christ have mercy on Sargis . . . the *metat*.

Obviously, the fresco was the work of three Armenians: T’eodoros, Xač’atur, and Sargis. The inscriptions allude to the presence of other Armenians held in slavery in Egypt. These Armenians call themselves *metat* (or metal) and ask Christ’s mercy on all. In medieval Armenian, the word referred to convicts condemned to hard labor in the remote mines of silver, copper, gold, and so on.³¹⁵ During the early 1070s, the village of Maxt’ellē in the province of Kesun/Kaysūm, where T’eodoros comes from, was under the control of Philaretus, who in 1082 gave Kaysūm and Ra’bān to Goḡ Vasil.

The fresco was completed during the term of Catholicos Grigoris (1075/467H–1117/511H). According to modern Armenian sources, and based on the inscriptions, the White Monastery was transferred to the Armenians during the term of Catholicos Grigoris most probably by Badr al-Jamālī himself.³¹⁶ The closest possible period for the painting of the fresco could be the early 1080s. T’eodoros is also familiar with Martyrophil’s baptismal name, Vahram. The latter died in 1105

in Kaysūm, which was then still under Goṯ Vasil. The renovations of the White Monastery were probably ordered by Grigoris, but the identification of the latter through his uncle is very peculiar and points to a very old acquaintance back in the north. Otherwise, it is not customary to mention the secular name of clergymen of the status of Martyrophil, unless the person has a message to transmit.

The more interesting question concerns the circumstances in which these professional men were brought to Upper Egypt as *metaṭs*, or prisoners condemned to hard labor. From the beginning, Badr al-Jamālī (and later on, al-Afḍal) recruited Armenians in their construction projects such as the walls and gates of Cairo. Nothing is known about the status of these craftsmen. It is hard to suggest any hypothesis about the circumstances in which they became slaves. Surely, the desert and the heat in a place so far from home may have led them to describe themselves as *metaṭs*. Judging from their acquaintance with Martyrophil, and the pious tone of the inscriptions, these painters and their colleagues were pro-Pahlawuni Apostolic Armenians. The other question is as follows: Why would a church and monastery in Upper Egypt be needed for the Armenians in Egypt? There must have been a community there and a clergy in their service. In 1137, vizier Bahrām, in turn a Pahlawuni, wished to withdraw to this monastery, and caliph al-Ḥāfiẓ offered him the monastery and its district as his *iqṭāʿ*.

B. Armenian Forms in Fāṭimid Egypt

Armenian contribution to Egyptian architecture started with Badr's large-scale construction and reconstruction projects. "For the first time since the days of the al-'Azīz (975–996/365–386)," says Lane-Poole, "Cairo became the home of architects,"³¹⁷ who being mostly Armenian introduced new elements and styles. With their imposing number and scale, Badr's architectural works were integral elements of the Armenian Period and should be considered the record of the cultural and political legacy of the Armenians in a Muslim country of the significance of Egypt. In 1952, probably realizing the dimensions of Armenian involvement in Egypt and the poor historic record, Creswell wrote in a footnote: "the question of Armenians in Egypt under the Fāṭimids has not received the attention it deserves,"³¹⁸ a huge understatement indeed.

Around 1077, Badr launched his construction projects and continued to the end of the 1080s. Many of his early projects were relatively

minor and partial religious constructions, such as the minarets of Esnā, Mashhad al-Baḥrī or al-Bāb, al-Mashhad al-Qiblī or Bilāl, some in Aswān, and Abū'l-Ḥajjāj at Luxor.³¹⁹ The earliest building related to Badr's name was his first house on Barjawān street. It was a modest palace that was later on called *Dār al-Muẓaffar*. Qasr al-Barjawān took on a unique importance when Badr built a commercial district around it. It was predictably called the *Juyūshī Sūq* (market). According to al-Maqrizī, this *sūq* extended from the Barjawān palace to the Mosque of al-Ḥakīm.³²⁰ The shops opened for the greater part of the day and night, and everything from kitchenware to meat, vegetables, and agricultural tools was sold there. Badr is also considered the author of the idea of developing broad expanses and elevated planes with greeneries known as *manāẓir* (plural of *manẓar*, scene). These spaces became gathering places for official and military occasions and eventually turned into public parks.³²¹

A personal tragedy is attached to the 'Aṭṭarīn Mosque in Alexandria, which was completed in 1086/479H. This mosque was built to commemorate Badr's bitter victory over the rebels led by his elder son al-Awḥad, whom he personally killed.³²² As just mentioned, during the same year, he built the enigmatic Mashhad (or the Juyūshī Mosque) on Muqaṭṭam Hill, completed in 1085, as an inscription on the entrance shows. It seems that the subjection of Alexandria, a traditionally and perpetually dissident Sunnī stronghold, meant the consolidation of his control over the country. From 1085 to 1092, Badr was involved in building the great door of the Tomb of Sitt Nafīṣah, the Mashhad in 'Akkā for al-Ḥusayn's head (1086/479), the Maqṣ Mosque, the door of the Mosque of Ibn Ṭulūn, and parts of the Mosque of al-Ḥakīm.³²³ The massive walls and gates of Cairo were built during the same decade.

The walls or the fortifications of Cairo were initially erected by Jawḥar more than a hundred years earlier. These brick walls defined the Mu'izzī Cairo or al-Qāhirah. They were designed to defend it against the attacks of the Qarmāṭī Ismā'īlīs who were opposed to the Fāṭimid Caliphate. This Cairo was almost a fortress for caliph al-Mu'izz who entered as a dissident Muslim sovereign into a Sunnī society and country. When Badr took over the vizierate, he ordered the dismantling of the old walls, beyond which most of the city extended, and the construction of new walls. While the city walls Jawḥar built for Mu'izz were primarily fortifications, Badr's initiative to expand and enclose Cairo by walls and gates was a simultaneously urban and military

project, one of the few in Islamic history before the Crusaders.³²⁴ It was meant to commemorate the power and the glory he sought to achieve through the caliphate.

There is an intriguing aspect about the walls of Cairo: At least two, if not all of the three, figures involved in their construction and reconstruction were of an Armenian background.³²⁵ The three gates of Cairo, Bāb Zuwaylah (in fact, two gates in a corner), Bāb al-Futūḥ (Gate of Conquests, the cover photo), and Bāb al-Naṣr (Gate of Victory) were moved by Badr to different positions and built of stone by three Christian Armenian brothers from Edessa, between 1087 and 1092.³²⁶ Later on, the facade of the Aqmar Mosque was also the work of an "Armenian Christian architect," no name mentioned. The use of stone instead of brick introduced new architectural concepts and techniques into late Fāṭimid architecture, and the credit for the "triumph of stone over brick"³²⁷ goes to Badr and his Armenian cultural background in the Syro-Anatolian world.

After the fall of Edessa to Seljuk Malikshāh in 1086/479H, the migrants who were mainly Armenians and Christians dispersed throughout the whole region. To this great exodus, Creswell relates the presence and employment of the "three Christian brothers" from Edessa to the gates of Cairo. To support this observation, he lists a number of Christian architects who came from similar backgrounds and worked on mosques and other projects in Muslim cities such as Devrigui (Tephrike), Diyār Bakr, Maragha, Khilāt, and Aleppo.³²⁸ He goes on to say that these architects must have already been in Cairo after events in the north and were hired by Badr. However, other indications in Egyptian and Fāṭimid architecture (such as the altar and frescos of the White Monastery) support the suggestion that Badr and Ṭalā'ī much later deliberately hired Armenian architects from among others, just as they employed their own compatriots for other tasks as well. Builders and artisans such as glass makers did what they were trained to do. "We should expect to find many architectural details imported from Northern Syria and Mesopotamia," says Creswell.³²⁹

The spherical-triangle pendentives are such details that were applied for the first time in Egypt in Badr's constructions. The last time they were used in the Muslim architecture of Syria, says Creswell, was at Quṣayr 'Amrā around 712, and Ḥammān al-Sarakh around 725. During the next three centuries, we find no similar examples. However, further north, and during the seventh century, pendentives

were popular in Armenia, where they were executed in cut stone. Creswell then gives specific examples, with illustrations in a number of Armenian churches: the Cathedral of T'alın (built before 783), the Church of St. Gregory at Gošavank' (985), the Cathedral of Ani (1010), "a ruined building forming part of a group of three at Marmašēn, which Strzygowski places around 1000," the Church of St. Gregóry at Keč'aris (1033), the Church of Šořakat' (around 1038), and so on.³³⁰

The spherical pendentives were employed to carry the domes of the entrance passages of Bāb al-Futūh, Bāb Zuwaylah, and the rooms on the upper parts of the towers on each side of Bāb al-Našr. All three examples, observes Creswell, have shallow domes and the same curvature. He explains,

They are all beautifully cut stone, like the rest of the gateways, and each dome is closed in the centre by a single keystone, but, what is still more remarkable, the pendentives of the dome of the Bāb al-Futūh and Bāb al-Zuwaylah exhibit the same peculiarity that we have already noticed in the early pendentives of Syria, viz. the broadening out of the top course of the pendentive towards each extremity. That this curious technique had penetrated into Armenia, may be seen by turning to the . . . pendentives at Ketsharus [Keč'aris] . . . which distinctly exhibit this peculiarity. This detail is so remarkable that I do not hesitate to affirm that at least some Armenian [not Syrian, because the spherical-triangle pendentive had gone out of use in Syria at this time] masons must have been employed by the Armenian general Badr al-Jamālī for his great works of fortification. They could have left no more convincing signature. But it is possible that it was necessary actually to import them.³³¹

Creswell gives other examples of spherical pendentives in later works: the Aqmar Mosque (1125/519), Šalāh ed-Dīn's Gateway at Burj al-Zafar³³² built during the 1180s at a time when Bahā' ed-Dīn Karakūsh was in charge of constructions. Among other elements in late Fātimid architecture that indicate northern influences are the decorations of the frontal arch of Bāb al-Futūh. "The nearest parallel that I have been able to find occurs on a capital of the Church of the Virgin (al-'Adhrā') at Mayyāfāriqīn believed to date from the end of the sixth century."³³³ In the region of Diyār Bakr, in particular, Creswell mentions another element that stands as a bridge between the north and Egypt. This is the small bull's head relief on Bāb al-Futūh and identical forms in the east *riwāq* of the Great Mosque of Diyār Bakr (1124/5).³³⁴ Several other features of Badr's constructions of northern

origin and assimilated in later Muslim architecture are also referred to by Creswell. Some of these are the square towers, masonry bonded with columns, semicircular vaults cut out of a single block, lintels with a wedge-shaped relieving block, intersecting vaults, cushion voussoirs, shields such as the ones on Bâb al-Naşr, bull's heads such as the ones on the brackets of Bâb al-Futûh, and so on.

C. Badr's Juyûshî Mosque/Mashhad on Muqaţţam Hill 1085: Memorial to Power and Tragedy

Overlooking southern Cairo, the Juyûshî Mosque or the Mashhad (sanctuary, memorial) is a rectangular construction (15 m × 18 m) on the edge of Muqaţţam Hill. The minaret of this building rises twenty meters, and above the entrance, there is a marble slab with the following inscription:

This *zâwiyah* [chapel, sanctuary] has been built by the servant of our lord and master Imâm al-Mustanşir bi'llâh, the Amîr al-Juyûsh. (The date is April–May 1085/Muḥarram 478).³³⁵

The *miḥrâb* (prayer niche) measures 3 × 5 meters and, according to Creswell, this “magnificent specimen of stucco ornament is the first example” of its kind since the mosque of al-Azhar built 113 years earlier by Jawhar, in 972/361H.³³⁶ The stalactite cornice employed in this building, the “earliest existing example” in Egypt, is the most convincing evidence of the fact that Badr had hired Armenian architects from Edessa before the fall of the city in 1086, as the next example of these decorations are found in the Minaret of Ani, the Bagratid capital, built in 1073. Consequently, the Minaret of the Juyûshî Mosque is the second example. The third is found in the walls of Cairo, next comes Bâb al-Futûh, and, finally, there is the Mosque of al-Aqmar. Creswell concludes,

As the first two examples in Egypt are due to the Armenian wazîr Badr al-Gamâlî, and the next oldest example is in Armenia, it very much looks as if Armenians were intermediaries whereby this Persian motif was transmitted to Egypt.³³⁷

One of the most important examples of Persian influence is the *miḥrâb* of the Mosque of Ibn Tûlûn, known as the Miḥrâb of al-Afḍal Shâhanshâh, built in 1094, within the first year of his vizierate.³³⁸ The Juyûshî Mosque is sometimes referred to as *Badr's Tomb* and anyway, the burial place of Badr is a controversial subject. There are two

contradictory accounts, one from al-Maqrīzī and another from Abū Ṣāliḥ. They reflect the mixed cultural and religious loyalties of Badr himself. Abū Ṣāliḥ's story is as follows:

Badr was a friend to all Christians, whether high or low. He reconstructed the Armenian Church of St. James [*Surb Yakob*] in the Basatīn district and renovated it a second time. He also completed the [adjacent] church, which, however, he did not cause to be consecrated, nor was liturgy celebrated in it. When the amīr died he was buried in this church. Now the monastery [in which this church was] stands in the midst of gardens and plots of vegetables and cornfields, and it is reckoned among the most charming of resorts for pleasure.³³⁹

Al-Maqrīzī mentions the burial place of Badr five times. According to him, the location of the tomb is in the exterior part of Bāb al-Naṣr north of a sanctuary that was on that lot. According to him, al-Afḍal, Kutayfāt, and other members of the family also were buried there.³⁴⁰ In general, the Juyūshī Mosque is described as one of the most famous of the mausoleums built in the eleventh century. Lev finds the "motives behind building of the Mashhad al-Juyūshī" "elusive."³⁴¹ Just as the size and grandeur of this structure matched the ambition and achievements of Badr, its shape witnessed the complexity of his cultural personality. The Mosque also had another role: it introduced the "practice of associating a tomb, usually of the founder, with a mosque."³⁴² The practice was very common in the Armenian cultural-religious tradition, but was novel in Islamic culture. What better way could a militant-religious culture similar to that of the Muslim or heterodox Armenians find to synthesize power with immortality than a religious structure that sits in glory on the acropolis of Cairo?

Two relatively recent articles by Yūsuf Rāghib resolve many of the puzzles of this peculiar structure.³⁴³ Ordinarily, says Rāghib, the term *mashhad* has funerary connotations, and this edifice has been accepted as a "martyrium." The term can be taken to mean both a "place of martyrdom" and a "visiting/gathering place."³⁴⁴ He then traces the origin of the application of the term to north Syria, incidentally, where Badr came from. The word appears in an epigraph inscribed around the middle of the ninth century in the Citadel of Salāmiyah, an Ismā'īlī stronghold/town between Ḥimṣ and Ḥamāh. There is reference to a "mashhad built by a certain Abū'l-Faraj 'Abd al-Wahāb Ibn . . . 'Abbās Ibn 'Abd al-Ṣamad, but no mention is made of any tomb."³⁴⁵

The second instance in which the term *mashhad* is used brings us closer to the background of Badr in Aleppo. The word appears on the mausoleum of a grandson of 'Alī al-Maḥāsīn, and is built by the Amir Sayf al-Dawlah al-Ḥamdānī in 962/351H. By the late tenth century, the term was applied to locations quite different from the initial Alid mausoleums and sanctuaries, such as venerated locations, caves, and springs. A *mashhad*, however, is always a form of sanctuary, a prayer/visiting/gathering place that may also contain a tomb.³⁴⁶ Rāghib is of the view that in addition to other indications, the various Qur'ānic verses inscribed in the Juyūshī Mosque are not indicative of a tomb or burial place, but of success and victory, or "*fath*."³⁴⁷

This observation would have solved the ambiguities surrounding this structure, if it were not for the existence of other similar structures around it on Muqaṭṭam Hill. The reason for the confusion, even the inscription on the entrance, is because of the existence of an adjacent little building or habitat of a certain unknown figure called Sīdī 'Abd Allāh al-Juyūshī.³⁴⁸ This structure may have become a part of a sanctuary by the fifteenth century; hence, the source of the appellation of the structure as a *mashhad* rather than just a commemorative mosque. Rāghib believes that it was just one of the commemorative sanctuaries which became common in the late Fāṭimid period. The historical "accident" that raised the building to a sanctuary, as Rāghib believes, became a factor in its preservation.³⁴⁹

D. The "Thousand and One Nights" of al-Afḍal

Two mosques are mentioned as al-Afḍal's constructions: the Fiyalah Mosque (Elephants' Mosque, for the shape and number of its domes that from a distance gave the structure and impression of an elephant herd)³⁵⁰ and the Raṣd Mosque (Observatory Mosque).³⁵¹ The *miḥrāb* at the Mosque of Ibn Ṭulūn (1094) is perhaps the most original of al-Afḍal's works. He has also ordered the construction of a *Mashhad* at Aswān (1098–1100) and the *Masjid* Khedrah Sharīfah (1107/1108).³⁵² Al-Afḍal's palaces, summer resorts, exotic gardens, artificial lakes, irrigation canals, drinking halls, and treasures put him in a thousand-and-one night legendary context. Hitti says,

The prosperity which the country enjoyed under the two caliphs al-Mu'izz and al-'Azīz, and later on under the two viziers of Armenian origin (Badr and al-Afḍal 1074–1121), a prosperity worthy of the Pharaonic or Alexandrian age, was reflected in the sphere of art.³⁵³

Al-Afḍal was famous for his lavish palaces, in particular. Some of these were Dār al-Dhahab (Palace of Gold),³⁵⁴ Dār al-Ḍiāfah (Guest House, this was initially Badr's first palace on Barjawān street),³⁵⁵ Dār al-Qibab (Palace of Domes), Dār al-Wizārah al-Kubrah (the Great Ministerial Palace),³⁵⁶ Dār al-Mulk (Palace of Lordship),³⁵⁷ and al-Afḍal's last residence, where he moved all the government records. He was also given special credit for cultivating exotic gardens and nature resorts, such as Manẓarat al-Ba'l, al-Tāj, and al-Khams Wujūh, as mentioned by al-Maqrīzī.³⁵⁸ The large irrigation project known as *Baḥr Abī al-Munajja* was al-Afḍal's contribution to the agricultural sector.³⁵⁹ The treasures of the *Shāhanshāh*, as he liked to be called, became the subject of long descriptions by almost all historians.³⁶⁰ After his assassination and the elimination of almost his entire family, his great nephew and protégé caliph al-Āmir needed almost two months (according to al-Maqrīzī and other sources) to move his benefactor's and victim's treasures to the royal palace.

During his brief term of less than a year, vizier Yānis managed to start the construction of two mosques in his name, Masjid al-Faṭḥ and Masjid Yānis, outside the Gate of Sa'adah. The latter was completed by his sons after his assassination by al-Ḥāfiẓ.³⁶¹ According to al-Maqrīzī, Ṭalā'i' built the great Mosque of al-Ṣāliḥ (Jāmi' al-Ṣāliḥ), just outside the Zuwaylah Gate, to bury the head of al-Ḥusayn brought from 'Akkā. The mosque was also meant to contain his tomb as well.³⁶² This mosque, partly destroyed during the earthquake of the year 1302–1303/702, was reconstructed by Amīr Sayf ed-Dīn Baktimūr al-Gukandar.³⁶³ Being a peculiar structure as well, this mosque had a lasting influence on Muslim architecture.³⁶⁴ Ṭalā'i' also built a Mashhad for the tomb of the assassinated caliph al-Zāfir and called it Mashad al-Ḥalibiyīn.³⁶⁵ A third mosque built by him known as Masjid al-Ṣāliḥ stood to al-Maqrīzī's time, or after 1398/800H. According to the latter, observatories were installed on its roof.³⁶⁶ Two streets were named after Ṭalā'i': Khawkhāt al-Ṣāliḥiyah and Ḥārat al-Ṣāliḥiyah.³⁶⁷ The brick fortifications around Bilbays were a part of his military architecture.³⁶⁸ Al-Maqrīzī also speaks of a mausoleum mosque by a minor and almost unknown figure, a ghulām of Badr's son Muẓaffar, Abū Maṣṣūr Qusta al-Armanī the governor of Alexandria.³⁶⁹ The Mosque of Durri was the work of another Armenian ghulām of Muẓaffar, Shahāb al-Dawlah Durri (1138–1139/533), who was a radical Imāmī and had a position in the court of caliph al-Ḥāfiẓ.³⁷⁰

Notes

1. See Seta B. Dadoyan, *The Fatimid Armenians: Cultural and Political Interaction in the Near East* (Leiden: Brill, 1997).
2. Nupar Tēr Mik'aëlean, *Egiptahay Gaṭut'ē 10-15 Darerum* [The Armenian Community in Egypt during the 10th -15th Centuries] (Cairo: Hay Azgayin Himnadram, 1995), 43–44.
3. Bishop Aṭavnuni, "Anapatakan keank'ē Egiptosi mēj" [Monastic Life in Egypt], *Tat'ew Yearbook* (1929): 39–50.
4. Arshag Alboyajian, *AMH Egiptosi Nahangē ew Hayerē* [The Egyptian Province of the UAR and the Armenians] (Cairo: Nor Asdī, 1960), 8–9.
5. Ibid., 15; Tēr Mik'aëlean, *Egiptahay Gaṭut'ē 10-15 Darerum*, 59.
6. Gēworg Messerlean, *Akanavor Hayer Egiptosi mēj* [Prominent Armenians in Egypt] (Cairo: Sahak Mesrop, 1947), 13–14.
7. Al-Maqrizī, *Kitāb al-Mawā'iz wa'l-l-Itibār bi Dhikr al-Khiṭaṭ wa'l-Āthār* [Exhortations and Contemplation of the Mention of Plans and Monuments], 4 vols., ed. Aḥmad'Alī al-Maligī (Cairo: Maktabat al-Maligī, 1906–1908).
8. Ibid., vol. I, 264–66.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid., vol. III, 309.
11. Ibn Taghrī Birdī and Jamāl ed-Dīn, *Al-Nujūm al-Zāhirah fī Mulūk Miṣr wa'l-Qāhirah* [The Sparkling Stars among the Kings of Egypt and Cairo], Vol. II (1st vol. in Leiden: Brill, 1851–1855, the rest in Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyah, 1929–1972), 245, 278.
12. In Fuṣṭāṭ the Greek and Armenian mamlūks lived in a special sector called Ḥayy al-Rūmī.
13. Farhad Daftary, *The Ismā'ilīs: Their History and Doctrines* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 169.
14. Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (New York: The Modern Library, 1932), 889. In 648, the Emperor Constans II sent rebel Armenian troops to Syracuse in Sicily. A rebellion by Armenian soldiers against the Empress Irene in 792/793 caused the branding of thousands of them and their forced settlement in Sicily in 794. See: Alboyajian, *Patmut'iwn Hay Gaṭ'akanut'ean*, 331–32. Also see Charanis, *Armenians in the Byzantine Empire*, 14–16. Theophanes, *Chronographia*, vol. I, ed. De Boor (Leipzig: 1883), 469.
15. Daftary, *Ismā'ilīs*, 171–73. Jawhar's famous Covenant ('ahd) to the Egyptians is preserved in al-Maqrizī, *Itti'āz al-Hunafā' bi Akhbār al-A'imma al-Fāṭimiyyīn al-Khulafā'* [Book of Contentment of the Hanafis concerning the History of the Fāṭimid Caliphs], vol. I, ed. Jamāl ed-Dīn al-Shayyāl (Cairo: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1948), 67–70.
16. Daftary, *Ismā'ilīs*, 173.
17. Abū Ṣāliḥ the Armenian, *Churches and Monasteries of Egypt*, trans. B. T. A. Evetts, notes Alfred J. Butler (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 271.
18. Ḥasan, Ḥasan Ibrāhīm, *Ta'rikh al-Dawlah al-Fāṭimiyyah fī'l-Maghrib* [The History of the Fāṭimid State in Maghreb, Egypt and Syria], (Cairo: Maktabat al-Nahḍah al-Miṣriyyah, 1981), 155.

19. S. Lane-Poole, *Mohammedan Dynasties*, 103–8.
20. Ibn Khalikān, *Wafayāt al-A'yān* [The Famous and the Distinguished], ed. Ihsān 'Abbās, 8 vols., vol. I (Beirut: Dār al-Thaqāfah, 1968–1971), 344.
21. Daftary, *Ismā'īlis*, 174.
22. Ibid., 176.
23. Ibn Khalikān, *Wafayāt*, vol. I, 345.
24. Gaston Wiet, *L'Égypte musulmane de la conquête Arabe a la conquête Ottomane* [Muslim Egypt from the Muslim Conquest to the Ottoman Conquest] (Cairo: 1932), 173.
25. Y. T'uršean, "XI ew XII Dareri Egiptahay Gałut'i Patmut'iwnic" [From the History of the Armenian Community in Egypt during the Eleventh and Twelfth centuries], *Arevelagitut'ean Žołovac'u* II (Erevan: 1964), 301–17, 306.
26. Jordan Ivanow, *Bogomilian Girk'ern u Hēk'iat'nerē* [The Bogomil Books and Legends] (Sofia: The Bulgarian Academy, 1925). Excerpts published in: G. Mesrop, "Pulgarahay Hin Gałut'in Cağumē" [The Origin of the Ancient Armenian Community in Bulgaria], in *Haykaran* (Sofia: 1931), 42–51.
27. Wiet, *L'Égypte musulmane*, 173.
28. See *Nor Baṛgirk' Haigazian Lezwi* [New Haigazian Dictionary] (Erevan: Erevan State University, 1979), vol. I, 754.
29. Matthew, *Chronicle*, 228–29. The passage: "Ew ēr t'uakanut'eans hayoc' 1075 ew apa zkni aysōrik gnac' Tēr Grigoris i Costandnupolis ew andust i Hořom ew ekeal yEgiptos. Šrjeć'aw ēnd anapatsn amenayn ařajin srboc' harc'n ew katareac' zamenayn p'ap'ak'umn srtin iwroy, ew hastateac' zandn iwr zat'or ew kangeal andn norogeac' zamenayn karg surb ekelec'woy ew bazum p'aik' ew metcutiwn ēnkalew Tēr Grigoris i t'agaworēn Egiptosi ařawel k'an i t'agaworēn hořomoc'. Ew bazum zōrk' žołowec'an yEgiptos ibrew eresun hazarac' ew Tēr Grigoris zkni žamanakac' jeřnadreal kat'ufikos zTēr Grigor k'urordin iwr ew ink'n gayr yašxarhin hayoc', vasn zi teř kendani ēr mayrn nora."
30. Ghevont Alishan, *Hayapatum* [History of Armenians] (Venice: St. Lazar, 1901), 351. The passage: "Yognaki xosac'ut'eamb . . . dnēr ew ayl patčairs bāni yałags oč' lineloy and yazgn hayoc' unayn zhovueln iwr isk na pařnayr zpatčairs ew erdmamb hastatel lnul zašxarhn hayastaneayc' azgōk', zor ew arar isk ew pazmac'oyc' and pazmut'iwn yuyž."
31. T'uršean, "XI ew XII Dareri Egiptahay Gałut'i Patmut'iwnic," 308.
32. Małak'ia Ormanian, *Azgapatum* [History of the Nation], 2 vols. (Istanbul: V. & H. Der Nersessian, 1912), vol. II, 1311.
33. T'uršean, "XI ew XII Dareri Egiptahay Gałut'i Patmut'iwnic," 308.
34. The poem is cited in Ghevont Alishan's Introduction to the concise Armenian edition of Abū Šaliḥ's *Churches and Monasteries of Egypt* or *Abu Sahl Hay, Patmutiwn Ekeleac' ew Vanoreic' Egiptosi* [Abusahl the Armenian, History of the Churches and Monasteries of Egypt] (Venice: St. Lazar, 1933), 44. The passage from the poem by Šnorhali where the latter refers to his ancestors: "And i hatorēn surb / Zař i k'erēn ordi cneal / zGrigoris hamanuaneal/. . . / Or Yovsēp'ay mecin nmaneal / Zhamazgis zkni zgeal / Zari elbars iwr k'ajac'eal / Ėst Yesovay zoravareal / Oroy Vahram verajayneal / Miwsoyn Vasak anuaneal / Ork' vehagoyn p'ařs ēnkaleal / Ew mecargi patwoy haseal / zPaterazm azanc' vaneal hakařakac' yałtoł gteal / Vasn aysorik škełac'eal / Ew ašxarhi noc'unc' tireal."

35. Or "Turbessel" in the chronicles of the Crusaders, *Awetec' Blur* [Hill of Good Tidings] in medieval Armenian literature.
36. Marius Canard, "Un Vizir Chretien a l'Epoque Fatimide" [A Christian Vizier during the Fātimid Period], in *Miscellanea Orentalia* (London: Miscellanea Orientalia, 1973), 88.
37. Ibn Muyassar, Muḥammad Ibn 'Alī Ibn Yūsuf Ibn Jalab, *Akhbār Miṣr* [History/News of Egypt], ed. M. Henri Massé (Cairo: Imprimerie de l'Institut Français d'Archeologie Orientale, 1919), vol. II, 78.
38. al-Qalqashandī, Abū'l-'Abbās Aḥmad Ibn 'Alī al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-Ashā fī Shīnāt al-Inshā'*, ed. M. A. Ibrāhīm (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Maṣriyah, 1913–1917). These letters are in the following order: The letter to Roger II of Sicily, vol. VI, 458–63; The three decrees related to the release and departure of Bahrām's relatives and Armenian soldiers, vol. VIII, 260–62; vol. XIII, 325, 326. An Armenian translation of these documents is made by Messerlean, *Akanavor Hayer*, 75–84, and reprinted in Appendix IV of Dadoyan, *The Fatimid Armenians*.
39. Canard, "Un vizir chretien a l'epoque Fatimide," 93.
40. Ibn Muyassar, *Akhbār Miṣr*, vol. II, 79.
41. Canard, "Un vizir chretien," 89.
42. See the Letter of al-Ḥāfiẓ to Roger II, al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-Ashā*, vol. VI, 461.
43. Michael the Syrian, *Chronicle*, vol. III, 240.
44. Canard, "Un Vizir Chretien," 94.
45. *Ibid.*, 95.
46. First Decree of al-Ḥāfiẓ, al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-Ashā*, vol. VIII, 261.
47. Letter of al-Ḥāfiẓ to Roger II, al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-Ashā*, vol. VI, 461.
48. The circumstances of Bahrām's rise to power and the repercussions of his appointment as Vizier of the Sword of Islam and of the Pen are discussed in detail in Chapter Four of Dadoyan, *The Fatimid Armenians*.
49. Y. Lev, *State and Society in Fātimid Egypt* (Leiden: Brill, 1991), 60.
50. Abdel Mun'im Mājid, *Zuhūr Khilāfat al-Fāṭimiyyīn wa Suqūtuha fī Miṣr: al-Ta'rikh al-Siyāsī* [The Rise and Fall of the Fātimid Caliphate in Egypt: The Political History] (Alexandria: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1968), 432.
51. Lev, *State and Society*, 61. The source: Al-Maqrizī, *Itti'āz al-Ḥunafā' bi Akhbār al-A'imma al-Fāṭimiyyīn al-Khulafā'* [Book of Contention of the Ḥanafīs Concerning the History of the Fātimid Caliphs], ed. M. H. M. Aḥmad (Cairo: Al-Majlis al-A'lā l'il-Sh'un al-Islāmiyah, 1971), vol. III, 169.
52. S. M. Stern, *Fātimid Decrees* (London: Faber and Faber, 1964), 35–45.
53. *Ibid.*, 53–58.
54. *Ibid.*, 55. The titles as they appear in the decree: "*al-sayyid al-ajall amīr al-juyūsh sayf al-Islām naṣir al-imām ghiāth al-anām abī al-muẓaffar Bahrām al-Ḥāfiẓī*"
55. Abū Ṣāliḥ, *Churches and Monasteries*, fol. 2b, 4–5.
56. *Ibid.*, fol. 3b, 7.
57. *Ibid.*, fol. 2b, 5.
58. al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-Ashā*, vol. VIII, 261.
59. *Ibid.*, 262.

60. Ibid., vol. XIII, 325–26.
61. Ibn Muyassar, *Akhbār Miṣr*, vol. II, 80; Also see Muḥammad J. Surūr, *Al-Dawlah al-Fāṭimiyah fī Miṣr* [The Fāṭimid State in Egypt] (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-ʿArabi, 1965–1966).
62. Ibn Muyassar, *Akhbār Miṣr*, vol. II, 84.
63. Tēr Mikʿaēlean, *Egiptahay Gatutʿē 10-15 Darerum*, 100–101.
64. Ibid., 102–10.
65. Philip K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs* (London: MacMillan, 1964), 622.
66. Ibn al-Qalānisī, *Dhayl Taʾrikh Dimashq*, 117.
67. Ibn al-ʿAdīm, *Zubdat al-Ḥalab*, vol. I, 215–16.
68. Al-Maqrīzī, *Ittiʿāz al-Hunafāʾ*, vol. II, 129.
69. Ibn al-ʿAdīm, *Zubdat al-Ḥalab*, vol. I, 215–21. Also see Thierry Bianquis, *Damas et la Syrie sous la domination fatimide* [Damascus and Syria under Fāṭimid Domination], 2 vols. (Damascus: Institut Francais de Damas, 1969), vol. II, 467.
70. The allegories were written, as al-Maʿarri says, on the request of his nephews, who were being urged to pay property tax for a barren piece of land they owned in Maʿarrat al-Nuʿmān, just south of Aleppo. The characters in the allegory are a hard working and blindfolded mule called *al-Shāhij* in the village, a horse called *al-Šāhil*, a devious pigeon called *Fakhīta*, a camel, and a fox. Al-Shāhij the mule worked hard on a barren and difficult land and depended on the fox to bring him news and rumors from Aleppo, the capital of the province. The reader is led to suspect the objectives of the negotiations and correspondence between ʿAzīz al-Dawlah and Basil II, who also exchanged presents. In the allegory, it is said that a gift of more than thirty ghulāms (who were “purified” as per Islamic Law after arrival) was sent by the emperor to please ʿAzīz al-Dawlah. See Abūʿl-ʿAlāʾ al-Maʿarri, *Risālat al-Šāhil waʾl-Shāhij*, ed. ʿĀishā ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, 2nd ed. (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿarif, 1984), 695.
71. Ibid., 218.
72. Daftary, *Ismāʿīlis*, 183.
73. Ibn al-ʿAdīm, *Zubdat al-Ḥalab*, 219.
74. Al-Maqrīzī, *Ittiʿāz*, vol. II, 179.
75. Al-Anṭākī, *Taʾrikh*, 394.
76. Ibid., 365.
77. Paula Sanders, *Ritual, Politics and the City in Fāṭimid Cairo* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1994), 30.
78. Ibn al-ʿAdīm, *Zubdat al-Ḥalab*, vol. I, 219–20, n. 3. Al-Maqrīzī has a more elaborate account in *Ittiʿāz*, vol. II, 129–31. Ibn Taghrī Birdī’s story is along the same lines too. See Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *al-Nujūm al-Zāhirah*, vol. IV, 195, also see Bianquis, *Damas et la Syrie*, vol. II, 399–400.
79. Al-Anṭākī, Yahyā Ibn Saʿīd. “Taʾrikh” [History], in *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium* 51–52; *Scriptores Arabici* VII. ed. L. Cheikhō, B. Carra de Vaux, and H. Zayyāt (Louvain: Peeters, 1954), 377; Ibn al-ʿAdīm, *Zubdat al-Ḥalab*, 220–21; Al-Maqrīzī, *Ittiʿāz*, vol. II, 131.
80. Ibn al-Qalānisī, *Dhayl Taʾrikh Dimashq*, 154.
81. Ibid., 157.
82. Bianquis, *Damas et la Syrie*, vol. II, 636.
83. Ibn al-Qalānisī, *Dhayl Taʾrikh Dimashq*, 159–60.

84. Daftary, *The Ismā'īlis*, 204.
85. Ibn al-Qalānisi, *Dhayl Ta'rikh Dimashq*, 157.
86. Al-Maqrizī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. II, 47.
87. Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *al-Nujūm al-Zāhirah*, vol. IV, 90; al-Maqrizī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. II, 36–37.
88. Ibid., 181–82.
89. Daftary, *Ismā'īlis*, 203.
90. Ibid.
91. Al-Maqrizī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. II, 408–9, 335–37.
92. Daftary, *Ismā'īlis*, 204.
93. Al-Maqrizī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. II, 211–12.
94. Ibid., vol. III, 18.
95. Lev, *State and Society*, 45.
96. Al-Maqrizī, *Itti'āz*, vol. II, 312.
97. Mājid, *Zuhūr Khilāfat al-Fātimiyyīn*, 394.
98. Ibid., 395–96.
99. According to Al-Maqrizī, the Ḥusayniyah was divided into two parts: a section, where the soldiers stayed, close to Bāb al-Futūḥ, and another near Bāb al-Naṣr. Later on, just outside Bāb al-Naṣr, a great cemetery was built, and the mausoleum of the Jamālīs stood there to al-Maqrizī's day, as he says. Gradually, the residents of the Ḥusayniyah nearby and Cairo buried their dead in this cemetery. See al-Maqrizī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. III, 33–34.
100. Ibn Muyassar, *Akhbār Miṣr*, vol. II, 30.
101. Mājid, *Zuhūr Khilāfat al-Fātimiyyīn*, 401.
102. Al-Maqrizī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. III, 18.
103. Sufean, *The Armenian Mamluks*, 38.
104. Ibid., 23.
105. al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-Ashā*, vol. III, 483.
106. Lev, *State and Society*, 127.
107. Ibid., 95.
108. Al-Maqrizī, *Itti'āz*, vol. II, 276–77; Messerlian, *Akanawor Hayer*, 99.
109. For a detailed discussion of this theme, see 'Abd el-Mun'im Mājid, *Nuzūm al-Fātimiyyīn wa Rusūmuhum fī Miṣr* [The Systems and Regulations of the Fātimids in Egypt], 2 vols., vol. I (Cairo: Maktabat al-Agelo al-Miṣriyah, 1953–955), 53–55.
110. Mājid, *Zuhūr Khilāfat al-Fātimiyyīn*, 404–5.
111. Al-Maqrizī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. II, 304.
112. A whole series of pieces of official costume were offered to Badr, as symbolic of his offices. Among them there was a turban with a tail that was worn by the military governors of Egypt to confirm his position as commander in chief of the army. One end of this turban was wrapped under the chin, and it meant that the wearer was of the men of the royal palace. A long robe embroidered with gold and a diamond necklace instead of the ordinary gold chain distinguished him as vizier of *tanfidh*. Finally, Badr was dressed up in the embellished pallium of the Chief of the Muslim *qādīs* (judges). See Mājid, *Zuhūr Khilāfat al-Fātimiyyīn*, 406.
113. Mājid, *Zuhūr Khilāfat al-Fātimiyyīn*, 407. The titles of Badr were: "Most Illustrious Lord (*al-Sayyid al-Ajal*), Commander of Armies (*Amīr al-Juyūsh*), Sword of Islam (*Sayf al-Islām*), Helper of the Imam (*Naṣīr al-Imām*),

- Protector of the Qādis, or the religious judges, of the Muslims (*Kāfil Quḍāt al-Muslimīn*), Guide of the Missionaries of the Believers (*Hādī Du'āt al-Mu'minīn*).
114. Lev, *State and Society*, 47. The subject of the vizierate in the Islamic states is discussed in detail in the *Fatimid Armenians*. The term *fatā* "was more common in the Muslim west" than in the east, and it indicated the patron–client relationship. However, the case of al-Mustanṣir and Badr was unusual, the master being less powerful than the client.
 115. Lev, *State and Society*, 47–48.
 116. Ibid., 137.
 117. Sanders, *Ritual, Politics*, 67.
 118. Daftary, *Ismā'ilis*, 213.
 119. Lev, *State and Society*, 138.
 120. Ibid., 197.
 121. Al-Maqrizī, *Itti'āz*, vol. II, 320.
 122. Abū Ṣāliḥ, *Churches*, fol. 2a, 2.
 123. Ibid.
 124. Ibid.
 125. Al-Maqrizī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. II, 184, 225; vol. III, 34, 179; vol. IV, 348.
 126. Ibid., vol. III, 34.
 127. Lane-Poole, *A History of Egypt*, 151.
 128. Al-Maqrizī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. II, 212.
 129. Ibn Taghri Birdī, *al-Nujūm al-Zāhirah*, vol. V, 116.
 130. Abū Ṣāliḥ, *Churches*, fols. 8a–9a, 17–19.
 131. Mājid, *Ḥuhūr Khilāfat al-Fāṭimiyyīn*, 399. The source: Abū Ṣāliḥ, *Churches*, fols 7a–9a, 10–11.
 132. Daftary, *Ismā'ilis*, 207.
 133. Al-Maqrizī, *Itti'āz*, vol. II, 326.
 134. Daftary, *Ismā'ilis*, 207–8.
 135. Al-Maqrizī, *Itti'āz*, vol. II, 321.
 136. Ibid., 321–322.
 137. Daftary, *The Ismā'ilis*, 222.
 138. Al-Maqrizī, *Itti'āz*, vol. II, 323.
 139. Ibn Muyassar, *Akhbār Miṣr*, vol. II, 37.
 140. Ibid., vol. II, 36–37.
 141. Al-Maqrizī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. IV, 330.
 142. Ibn Muyassar, *Akhbār Miṣr*, vol. II, 36–37.
 143. Al-Maqrizī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. II, 277. Also see Mājid, *Ḥuhūr Khilāfat al-Fāṭimiyyīn*, 410.
 144. Ibn Muyassar, *Akhbār Miṣr*, vol. II, 35.
 145. Sufean, *Armenian Mamluks*, 18.
 146. Alishaan, Introduction to Abū Ṣāliḥ's *Churches*' concise Armenian translation, 39.
 147. A sample is preserved in the Hermitage Museum of St. Petersburg. "The reputed son of Nizār [too] is said to have struck coins as caliph in the Yemen with the title al-Imām Muḥammad Ibn Nizār." See Lane-Poole, *A History of Egypt*, 162. Much later, in 1161, a man who claimed to be a son of Nizār called Abū 'Abdallāh al-Ḥusayn Ibn Nizār Ibn al-Mustanṣir arrived in Egypt from the Maghrib at the head of an army to reclaim his throne from the

- caliph of al-ʿĀdid, during the vizierate of Ruzzik. He was eventually killed in confrontations with this last Armenian vizier.
148. Daftary, *Ismāʿīlis*, 222.
 149. Mājid, *Ẓuhūr Khilāfat al-Fāṭimiyyīn*, 417.
 150. Alamūt means probably “Eagle’s Nest,” and it is also referred to as “Qalʿat al-Mawt” or “Fortress of Death” in Arabic. It was a mountain fortress in the central Alborz Mountains, south of the Caspian Sea, in the Qazwīn Province, about sixty miles from present-day Tehran in Iran. The ruins of the fortress still remain.
 151. Ibn Muyassar, *Akhbār Miṣr*, vol. II, 41.
 152. Lane-Poole has an amusing image of the relation of al-Afḍal to his “master” and their subsequent career: “Al-Afḍal had a little seat made on the pommel of his own saddle and rode through Cairo with the baby caliph seated in front.”
 153. Ibn Muyassar, *Akhbār Miṣr*, vol. II, 262–63.
 154. Wiet, *Grandeur de l’Islam*, 265.
 155. Al-Maqrīzī, *Ittiʿāz*, vol. I, 283. See further details in connection with Jerusalem and the holy places in Lev, *State and Society*, 41.
 156. Steven Runciman, *History of the Crusades* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1954), vol. I, 229.
 157. Lev, *State and Society*, 53.
 158. Runciman, *History of the Crusades*, vol. I, 229.
 159. *Ibid.*, 231.
 160. *Ibid.*, 233.
 161. *Ibid.*, 234.
 162. Gaston Wiet, *Grandeur de l’Islam de Mahomet à François 1er* [The Greatness of Islam from Muḥammad to François the First], (Paris: Table Rond, 1961), 178–80.
 163. *Ibid.*, 180.
 164. Runciman, *History of the Crusades*, vol. I, 297.
 165. Lane-Poole, *History of Egypt*, 164–65.
 166. See a summary of the divisions and ranks of the Fāṭimid army and administration, from Lane-Poole, *History of Egypt*, 154–57.
 167. Runciman, *History of the Crusades*, vol. I, 295–96.
 168. Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. II, 310.
 169. Lev, *State and Society*, 100.
 170. Al-Maqrīzī, *Ittiʿāz*, vol. I, 337–38.
 171. Based on Ibn ʿAbd al-Zāhir’s reports, al-Maqrīzī says that barracks were established for the training and education (*tarbiyah*) of the *shabāb* (adolescent boys reaching puberty). The younger boys (the *ṣibyān*) were trained in different barracks under special instructors, or *ustādhs*, and servants, or *khuddāms* of their own. The totality of these groups formed the core of the *hujariyah* troops, the number of which is estimated at between three and five thousand. See Y. Lev, *State and Society*, 100–101. The *ṣibyān al-khāṣ* had special barracks linked to the palace and were trained in archery and horsemanship. Also see W. J. Hamblin, “The Fāṭimid Army during the Early Crusades,” Ph.D. diss. (The University of Michigan, 1985), 42–47.
 172. Lev, *State and Society*, 124–25.

173. Ibid, 125. Two articles by C. Cahen are of particular interest for the subject of al-Afḍal's reforms: "L'Évolution de l'Iqtā' du IXe au XIIIe Siecles," *Annales Economiques, Sociétés, Civilizations*, 8(1953), 25–52 and "L'administration financière de l'armée fatimide d'après al-Makhzumi," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 15 (1972): 163–82.
174. Al-Maqrizī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. I, 83.
175. Lev, *State and Society*, 163. Lev quotes from H. Halm, *Ägypten nach den Mamlukischen Lehenregistren* (Wiesbaden, 1979), vol. I, 11.
176. Lane-Poole, *History of Egypt*, 164–65.
177. Al-Maqrizī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. IV, 330–31.
178. For al-Afḍal's verses see Dadoyan, *The Fatimid Armenians*, Appendix VI.
179. Ibn Muyassar, *Akhhbār Miṣr*, vol. II, 57.
180. Ibn al-Qalānisi, *Dhayl Ta'rikh Dimashq*, 323–24.
181. Lane-Poole, *History of Egypt*, 162.
182. Ibn Muyassar, *Akhhbār Miṣr*, vol. II, 73.
183. Daftary, *Ismā'ilis*, 266.
184. Stern, *Fāṭimid Decrees*, 45.
185. Ibid., 43–44.
186. Lev, *State and Society*, 57. Also see S. M. Stern, "The Succession to the Fāṭimid Imam al-Āmir, the Claims of the Later Fāṭimids to the Imāmate, and the Rise of Ṭayyibī Ismā'ilism," *Oriens* 4 (1951): 193 ff.
187. Daftary, *Ismā'ilis*, 267.
188. Lev, *State and Society*, 58.
189. Surūr, *Fāṭimid State in Egypt*, 120–21.
190. Ibn al-Qaṭṭān, part from *Naẓmu'l-Jumān fī Akhhbār al-Zamān*, ed. Maḥmūd Makkī (al-Rabāt, 1964), 185; H. I. Ḥasan, *Rise of the Fāṭimid Caliphate*, 426.
191. Ibn Muyassar, *Akhhbār Miṣr*, vol. II, 75.
192. Ibid., 74.
193. Lane-Poole, *History of Egypt*, 167.
194. Ibn Khalikān, *Wafayāt al-A'yān*, vol. II, 180; and Ibn Muyassar, *Akhhbār Miṣr*, vol. II, 75.
195. Daftary, *Ismā'ilis*, 267.
196. Ibn Muyassar, *Akhhbār Miṣr*, vol. II, 75.
197. Lane-Poole, *History of Egypt*, 167.
198. Al-Maqrizī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. II, 172.
199. Mājid, *Zuhūr Khilāfat al-Fāṭimiyyīn*, 427.
200. al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-A'shā*, vol. 9, 291–97.
201. Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *al-Nujūm*, vol. V, 237.
202. See Dadoyan, "Yānis," in *Encyclopedia of Islam—Second Ed.* (Leiden: E. J. Brill).
203. Ibn Muyassar, *Akhhbār Miṣr*, vol. II, 75. To the present, the name Bādīs is a distorted transliteration of the Armenian name Awetis. Armenian historians consider this figure and 'Abbās Armenians. 'Abbās is mentioned as the "step-son" of the vizier al-Ādil Ibn Sallār, the governor of Alexandria.
204. Daftary, *Ismā'ilis*, 268.
205. Ibn Muyassar, *Akhhbār Miṣr*, vol. II, 75.
206. Al-Maqrizī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. III, 268–69, vol. IV, 324.

207. Ibn Muyassar, *Akhbār Miṣr*, vol. II, 76; Al-Maqrizī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. III, 26–27.
208. Lane-Poole, *History of Egypt*, 171–72.
209. Ibid., 172. ‘Abbās fled to Syria, where he was killed with some help from the royal family. His son Naṣr was returned in an iron cage, tortured by the female relatives of the caliph, and was then crucified on the Zuwaylah Gate in Cairo. See Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *al-Nujūm*, vol. V, 311. Both editors of Ṭalā’i’s *Diwān*, A. A. Badawī and M. H. al-Aminī, relate that Naṣr’s body was left on the cross to the feast of ‘Āshūrā’ of the year 1156/551H. See Aḥmad Aḥmad Badawī, Introduction to *Diwān al-Wazīr Ṭalā’i al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ* (Cairo: Maktabat Nahdah, 1958), 5; Muḥammad Hādī al-Aminī, Introduction to *Diwān Ṭalā’i Ibn Ruzzik* (al-Najaf: al-Maktabah al-Ahliyah, 1964), 24.
210. See Al-Maqrizī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. III, vol. IV, 81–83; Ibn Khalikān, *Wafayāt al-A’yān*, vol. II, 528.
211. Al-Maqrizī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. II, 293.
212. Lane-Poole, *History of Egypt*, 173. These black flags were seen as the omens of the return of the ‘Abbāsids after seventeen years through the Ayyūbids. Al-Maqrizī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. II, 30. Also see Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī l-Ta’rikh*, vol. XI (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1979), 193–94.
213. M. H. al-Aminī, Introduction to *Diwān al-Ṭalā’i*, 24. See Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *al-Nujūm*, vol. V, 293; Ibn Muyassar, *Akhbār Miṣr*, vol. II, 94.
214. His titles were as follows: al-Sayyid al-Ajall, al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ, Nāṣir al-‘Imma, Kāshif al-Ghimma, Amīr-al-Juyūsh, Sayf al-Islām, Ghiyāth al-Anām, Kāfil Quḍāt al-Muslimīn, Hādī Du’āt al-Mu’minin, and Abū l-Ghārāt Ṭalā’i Ibn Ruzzik al-Fā’izī. Two documents written by the head of the palace secretariat, Abū Hajjāj Yūsuf Ibn Muḥammad (known as Ibn al-Khallāl), are preserved concerning the proclamation of Ṭalā’i as vizier. For both texts, see M. H. al-Aminī, Introduction to *Diwān Ṭalā’i Ibn Ruzzik*, 13–23; al-Syuṭī, Jalāl ed-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Ibn Abī Bakr. Ḥasan, *Husn al-Muḥādarah fī Akhbār Miṣr wa l-Qāhirah* [Excellent Lectures in the History of Egypt and Cairo], vol. II (Cairo: Fahmī al-Kutubī, 1909), 118–23. The first that was issued on the 14th of Rabī’, 549 was a statement of his titles; the second issued on the 16th of Rabī’ II, 549 was a confirmation of his absolute military, judicial, and civil-administrative powers.
215. Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *al-Nujūm*, vol. V (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyah, 1992), 328, the passage: “al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ Ṭalā’i Ibn Ruzzik, *wa kinyatuhu Abū l-Ghārāt, al-armanī al-aṣl*”; Al-Ṣafādī, *Kitāb al-Wafī b’il-Wafiyāt* [Complete Book about Prominent Figures], vol. XVI (Stuttgart, 1991), 503, the passage: “*al-armanī thumma al-maṣrī al-shī’i*”; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī l-Ta’rikh*, vol. XI (Beirut, 1979), 274, the passage: “al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ Abū l-Ghārāt Ṭalā’i Ibn Ruzzik al-Armanī.” Al-Dhahabī, *Ta’rikh al-Islām wa Wafayāt al-Mashāhīr wa l-A’lām*, ed. ‘Umar ‘Abd al-Salām Tadmuri (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-‘Arabī, 1995), 197, the phrase: “Ṭalā’i Ibn Ruzzik. . . *al-Armanī, thumma al-maṣrī, al-shī’i*.”
216. Hartwig Derenbourg, *Oumara du Yemen*, vol. II (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1904), 133, 5n.
217. Al-Aminī, Introduction to *Diwān Ṭalā’i*, 5, 1n.
218. See Ivanow, *Truth Worshipers of Kurdistan*, 51; The Encyclopedia of Islam, Supplement (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1938), 1–13.

219. Al-Aminī, Introduction to *Diwān Ṭalā'i*, 5–7.
220. Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. IV, 81–82; Al-Aminī, Introduction to *Diwān Ṭalā'i*, 8–9.
221. Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. IV, 82–83.
222. Al-Dhahabī, *Ta'rikh al-Islām*, 198.
223. For Ṭalā'i's term and tragic end, see Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. IV, 81–83; H. Derenbourg, 'Oumāra, vol. II, 161–62.
224. Al-Yamani, Najm ed-Dīn Abū Muḥammad 'Umāra Ibn Abī al-Ḥasan al-Hakamī, *Kitāb al-Nukat al-'Asriyyah fī Akhbār al-Wuzarā' al-Maṣriyyah* [Book of Contemporary Chronicles about Egyptian Viziers], ed. H. Derenbourg, vol. I (Paris: E. Leroux, 1898), 48–49. For the translation, see H. Derenbourg, 'Oumara, 160. In Arabic: "naḥnu fī ghaṣlatin wa naum, wa'l-mawtu 'uyūnu yaqṣāna la tanamu / qad raḥalna ilā al-ḥimami sininan, layta shi'ri mata yakūnu al-ḥimamu." In general, 'Umāra's literature and his *al-Nukat* or *Chronicles* are irreplaceable sources not only for Ṭalā'i's life and career but also for many figures of the period as well. The poet and Syrian prince Usāmah Ibn Munqidh is another source for the biography of Ṭalā'i.
225. A. A. Badawī, Introduction to *Diwān Ṭalā'i*, 7. See Dadoyan, *Fatimid Armenians*, Appendix VI, group 7.
226. Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī'l-Ta'rikh*, vol. XI, 274–75.
227. *Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1961), 453.
228. Dadoyan, *Fatimid Armenians*, 74.
229. See the *Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam*, 455; Al-Maqrīzī, *Itti'āz*, vol. II, 129.
230. Cahen, "Notes sur les origines de la communauté syrienne des Nusayris," *Revue des Études Islamiques* XXXVIII, no. 2 (1970): 247.
231. Derenbourg, 'Oumāra, vol. II, 93, 3n.
232. Ibid., 286. See Dadoyan, *Fatimid Armenians*, Appendix VI, group 11.
233. Badawī, Introduction to *Diwān Ṭalā'i*, 15.
234. Dadoyan, *Fatimid Armenians*, Appendix VI, groups 4, 5.
235. See Ibid., group 6.
236. See Ibid., Appendix VI, Groups 1,2,3.
237. Derenbourg, 'Oumāra, vol. II, 126–27, 42. Also see 'Umāra's account, *al-Nukat*, 46.
238. Derenbourg, 'Oumāra, vol. II, 128.
239. 'Umāra al-Yamani, *al-Nukat*, 113.
240. Daftary, *Ismā'ilis*, 270–71.
241. Dadoyan, *Fatimid Armenians*, Appendix VI, group 8.
242. See Ibid., group 9.
243. Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. I, 282.
244. Derenbourg, 'Oumāra, vol. II, 13334.
245. Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. III, 18.
246. Dadoyan, *Fatimid Armenians*, Appendix VI, group 10. Also, *Usāmah Ibn Munqidh*, trans. Philip K. Hitti (Beirut: Khayats, 1964), 30.
247. Al-Ṣafaḍī, *Kitāb al-Wāfi fī'l-Wafiyāt*, vol. XVI, 503.
248. Daftary, *Ismā'ilis*, 274.
249. See Ibn Khalikān, *Biographical Dictionary*, vol. I, 608; Derenbourg, 'Oumāra, 169.

250. See Ibn Taghri Birdī, *al-Nujūm*, vol. V, 329; Al-Maqrizī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. IV, 81–83.
251. ‘Umāra, *al-Nukat*, 47–48.
252. Badawī, Introduction to *Diwān Ṭalā’i*, 7.
253. *Kitāb al-’Iṭibār li Usāmā Ibn Munqidh*, ed. Philip K. Hitti (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1930), 6.
254. *Ibid.*, 23.
255. *Ibid.*
256. *Ibid.*, 26–27.
257. *Ibid.*, 34.
258. *Ibid.*, 35.
259. Paul M. Cobb, *Usāmā Ibn Munqidh – Warrior-Poet of the Age of Crusades* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2005), 73.
260. *Kitāb al-’Iṭibār li Usāmā Ibn Munqidh*, 103.
261. *Ibid.*, 202.
262. *Ibid.*, 106.
263. Derenbourg, ‘*Oumāra*, vol. II, 154, 4n., 181.
264. *Ibid.*, 171; Ibn Khalikān, *Wafayāt al-A’yān*, vol. I, 528.
265. Encyclopedia of Islam, III, 1190.
266. H. Derenbourg, ‘*Oumāra*, vol. II, 152.
267. Ibn al-Aṭhīr, *al-Kāmil fi’l-Ta’rikh*, vol. XI, 329.
268. ‘Umāra al-Yamānī, *al-Nukat*, 68.
269. *Ibid.*, 53–54.
270. Derenbourg, ‘*Oumāra*, vol. II, 186.
271. *Ibid.*, 59.
272. *Ibid.*, 53.
273. *Ibid.*, 55.
274. *Ibid.*, 55–57.
275. *Ibid.*, 58–59.
276. *Ibid.*, 65–66.
277. *Ibid.*, 59–60.
278. *Ibid.*, 61–62.
279. ‘Umāra, *Al-Nukat*, 53; Derenbourg, ‘*Oumāra*, vol. II, 188.
280. Derenbourg, ‘*Oumāra*, vol. II, 202–4.
281. ‘Umāra al-Yamānī, *al-Nukat*, 55–56.
282. Derenbourg, ‘*Oumāra*, 198–99.
283. *Ibid.*, 200; ‘Umāra, *al-Nukat*, 65.
284. Derenbourg, ‘*Oumāra*, vol. II, 200.
285. *Ibid.*, 208.
286. *Ibid.*, 209–211.
287. *Ibid.*, 213.
288. Derenbourg, ‘*Oumāra*, vol. II, 221. The source: *Le Continuateur Anonyme de l’Histoire des Patriarches d’Alexandrie*, ms. 302, II, 244 (text copied by M. Noel Giron).
289. Derenbourg, ‘*Oumāra*, vol. II, 238–239.
290. *Ibid.*, 245.
291. *Ibid.*, 247–50.
292. ‘Umāra, *al-Nukat*, 65.

293. For both, see *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. IV (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1978), 613–14.
294. Ibid.; Daftary, *Ismā'īlis*, 272.
295. *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. IV, 613.
296. Ibid., 614.
297. Mājid, *Ḥuhūr Khilāfat al-Fāṭimiyyīn*, 476.
298. Abū Shāmāh, *Kitāb al-Rawḍatayn fī Akhbār al-Dawlatayn*, ed. 'Abdallāh Ibn al-Su'ūd (Cairo, 1871), vol. I, 201.
299. Al-Suyūṭī, *Husn al-Muḥādara*, vol. II, 67.
300. Mājid, *Ḥuhūr Khilāfat al-Fāṭimiyyīn*, 477.
301. al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. II, 175.
302. al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-A'ṣhā*, vol. III, 520.
303. al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. IV, 192–93.
304. Ibid., vol. I, 16–17.
305. Mājid, *Ḥuhūr Khilāfat al-Fāṭimiyyīn*, 481. The source: Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufrij al-Kurūb fī Akhbār Banī Ayyūb*, ed. Al-Shayyāl [Disperser of Sadness in the Tales of the Ayyūbids], (Cairo, 1953–1958), vol. I, 213.
306. al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. III, 3; Ibn Khalikān, *Wafayāt al-A'yān*, vol. I, 175–77.
307. Mājid, *Ḥuhūr Khilāfat al-Fāṭimiyyīn*, 483.
308. Al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. II, 175; vol. III, 379; vol. I, 156.
309. See Mājid, *Ḥuhūr Khilāfat al-Fāṭimiyyīn*, 483–84.
310. Daftary, *Ismā'īlis*, 273.
311. Mājid, *Ḥuhūr Khilāfat al-Fāṭimiyyīn*, 484.
312. The Introduction to Abū Ṣāliḥ, *Churches*, xiv–xv.
313. Abū Ṣāliḥ, *Churches*, 236.
314. Ardashēs Cardashian, *Niwt'er Egiptosi Hayoc' Patmut'ean hamar* [Data for the History of the Armenians of Egypt] (Cairo: Nubar Press, 1943), 7–8.
315. *New Haigazian Dictionary*, vol. II, 252.
316. See Torkom Kushakian, "Spitak Vankē" [The White Monastery], in *Egiptosi Hayoc' Hin ew Ardi Ekelec'inerē* [The Ancient and Recent Armenian Churches of Egypt] (Cairo: Hapēt-Baghdasar Dbaran, 1927), 16–22. Of the same author, also see: "Hayerēn Arjanagrut'iwnner Verin Egiptosi Lpti Vank'i mē mēj" [Armenian Inscriptions in a Coptic Monastery of Upper Egypt], *Teot'ig, Amēnun Tarec'uyc'ē* [Everyone's Yearbook] (1923): 374–80.
317. Lane-Poole, *History of Egypt*, 152.
318. K. A. G. Creswell, *The Muslim Architecture of Egypt*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952), vol. I, n. 209.
319. Ibid., 147–55.
320. al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. III, 155.
321. Ḥasan, *History of the Fātimid State*, 534.
322. Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *al-Nujūm*, vol. V, 119.
323. Mājid, *Ḥuhūr Khilāfat al-Fāṭimiyyīn*, 401. The sources are G. Wiet's *Les Mosquées du Caire* (Paris, 1966) and other works of the same author.
324. Creswell, *Muslim Architecture*, vol. I, 165.
325. See Ibid., 204, 208; Messerlian, *Prominent Armenians in Egypt*, 31; Al-boyajian, *Patmut'iwn Hay Gatt'akanut'ean*, vol. II, 466; N. T. Mik'aēlean, *Egiptahay Ga'ut'ē 10-15 Darerum*, 163.

326. Abū Ṣāliḥ, *Churches*, 151. For the walls and the three gates consecutively, see Mājid, *Ḥuhūr Khilāfat al-Fāṭimiyyīn*, 204, 206, 208, 209–211.
327. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, 630.
328. Creswell, *Muslim Architecture*, vol. I, 163.
329. Ibid., 208.
330. Ibid.
331. Ibid., 208–9.
332. Ibid., 209.
333. Ibid., 215.
334. Ibid., 219.
335. Ibid., 160.
336. Ibid., 155.
337. Ibid.
338. Ibid., 221–22.
339. Abū Ṣāliḥ, *Churches*, ff. 98a–98b, 270–71.
340. The following are the references for Badr's Tomb in Al-Maqrizī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. II, 184; vol. III, 34; vol. III, 179; vol. III, 225; vol. IV, 348.
341. Lev, *State and Society*, 151.
342. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, 630.
343. The two articles by Yūsuf Rāghib: "Une Oratoire Fatimide au Sommet de Muqattam," [An Oratory on the Top of Muqattam Hill] *Studia Islamica* LXV (1957): 51–67; "Sur un Groupe de Musolées du Cimetière du Caire," [On a Group of Mausoleums of the Cemetery of Cairo] *Revue des Études Islamiques* 40 (1972): 189–95.
344. Rāghib, "Une Oratoire Fatimide," 55.
345. Ibid., 55–56.
346. Ibid., 56–57.
347. Ibid., 60.
348. Ibid., 64.
349. Ibid., 65–66. The source is E. M. Sartan, *Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975).
350. Al-Maqrizī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. III, 74.
351. Ibid., 321.
352. Creswell, *Muslim Architecture*, vol. I, 221.
353. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, 630.
354. Al-Maqrizī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. III, 102.
355. Ibid., vol. II, 338.
356. Ibid., 301–3.
357. Ibid., 374–75.
358. Ibid., 370–71.
359. Ibid., 381.
360. For al-Afḍal's treasures, see Al-Maqrizī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. I, 483–84; Ibn Khalikān, *Wafayāt al-A'yān*, vol. II, 451, vol. I, 614. Also see the Armenian translation of excerpts of Ibn Khalikān's *Wafayāt* (Cairo: 1935), 150. Ibn Muyassar, *Akhbār Miṣr*, vol. II, 57–59; Ḥasan, *The Fāṭimid State*, 557–58; Mājid, *Ḥuhūr Khilāfat al-Fāṭimiyyīn*, 422–23; Messerlian, *Prominent Armenians*, 41–47; Lane-Poole, *History of Egypt*, 165–66.
361. Al-Maqrizī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. IV, 268–69, 221, 324.
362. Ibid., vol. III, 220.

- 363. Ibid., vol. IV, 81; vol. II, 293.
- 364. Creswell, *Muslim Architecture*, vol. I, 287.
- 365. Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. II, 265.
- 366. Ibid., vol. IV, 324.
- 367. Ibid., vol. III, 73, 18.
- 368. Ibid., vol. I, 282.
- 369. Ibid., vol. III, 329.
- 370. Ibid., 326.

The “Dynastic Triangle” or the Second Age of Kingdoms—Diverging Paradigms and the Case of Armenian Cilicia: Twelfth to Fourteenth Centuries

I. The Dynastic Triangle or the Second Age of Kingdoms

This chapter suggests a new perspective toward the period from the late eleventh to the fourteenth centuries, which is commonly known as the *Turkish Period* or the *Crusader Period*. The tenth century was the Age of Kingdoms on the historic Armenian homeland driven by the traditional nobility. As viewed by this author, the eleventh and twelfth centuries were the period of Muslim–Armenian Realpolitik and power by extra-establishment and heterodox factions outside the historic land; during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, a Dynastic Triangle or what may be called a *Second Age of Kingdoms* appeared on the native land and outside it, this time by a lesser and orthodox nobility.

As of the mid-eleventh century, in addition to the local Arabs, Kurds, and Armenians, three new elements started arriving in the region: the Turkic tribes, the Crusaders, and soon the Mongols. During the previous period, the Armenian condition had already undergone radical changes, but a new and rather drastic phase in the entire region generated favorable circumstances and the opportunity for the Armenians to develop new power centers in three locations, thus creating, what I call, a Dynastic Triangle.

After the assassination of the last Bagratuni king Gagik II in 1079, his cavalry of freemen or azats dispersed, and a group of them settled around the fortress of Vahka in eastern Cilicia, a land on the north-eastern corner of the Mediterranean where Armenians often settled since Roman times. The Rubinian or Rubenid Barony or principality appeared just before the arrival of the Latin Crusaders and outlived them. In the northeast of Cilicia on the eastern part of the mainland, another dynastic power, the Zak'arians or the Zak'arids, emerged as an extension of the Chalcedonian Georgians and as a part of their kingdom. Allowed by the Mongols (during the second half of the thirteenth century), the small city-state or principality of Erznka/Erzinjān rose on the upper reaches of the western Euphrates, just south of the Pontus, under the Armenian Bishop of the city and his descendants. Erznka was an ephemeral yet unique and brilliant phase in Armenian history.

Even though during the eleventh to the fourteenth centuries there were three Christian powers in the region (Byzantium, Crusader states, and Georgia), it should be remembered that the general area was still under Muslim control. The three Armenian enclaves were inside the new Islamic world of Arabs, Turks, Turkmens, Kurds, Persians, and soon the Mongols. The so-called kingdoms of this second phase rose in different circumstances and had radically different manners of interacting in a dynamically changing and often hostile environment. The patterns of Armenian cultural-political interactions with both the Christians and Muslims took extreme and divergent forms. Again, only a holistic approach can detect and trace the peculiarities.

Even though the Zak'arids and the Brošians after them (in the same area) were, in turn, involved in complex relations with the Muslim people and powers in the region, their history on the eastern highlands of the mainland is in many ways a part of Georgian history. This is somehow peripheral to our theme, and only a brief reference will be made about their case as one of the three angles of what I called the Armenian Dynastic Triangle. The other angle, Erznka, is a cluster of paradigm cases and is the subject of Volume Three. This chapter is devoted mainly to the unique case of Armenian Cilicia.

II. The Mongols: Penetration and Politics

A. The Twelfth Century: Conversions and Social Change in Asia Minor and North Syria

By the early 1100s, the westward expansion of the Turkic tribes

slowed down, and Turkic principalities were established amid Christians in eastern Asia Minor. Georgia was to their north and east; Byzantium, to their west; and the Frankish Principalities of Edessa, Antioch, and Cilicia, to their east and south.¹ During these early periods, a "modus vivendi of sorts" developed between the locals and the incomers, as Bedrosian puts it. The population of eastern Asia Minor was overwhelmingly Armenian, and that of western Asia Minor was Greek. The various ruling Muslim factions accepted the status quo and recruited Armenians in their administration. The Shaddādids of Širak called in a Pahlawuni. The Armenians in the armies of the Seljuk Sultanate of Iconium and the Shah-i-Armans in the east received iqtā's, became hereditary rulers, and eventually converted to Islam. Bedrosian also observes that the "intermingling of cultures and institutions between the conquerors and the conquered was paralleled by intermarriages." The locals and settlers merged, conversions became more numerous, and as the influx of Turkmens increased, Asia Minor "metamorphosed from being Greek, Armenian, and Christian to being Turkish and Muslim."²

Since Islam was the only path to success, the period was also marked by voluntary conversions to Islam. Muslim Armenians rose to high administrative positions. Earlier, the military served as the context of Armenian conversions to Islam; whereas during the twelfth century and later on, the conversions were due to economic as well as cultural reasons. In other words, in the past, Islam was considered an alternative path to power and survival, whereas during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, it was adopted voluntarily as an alternative culture and community. The immediate background of this period was the Armenian *Intermezzo*, as discussed in Chapter 3. In addition to voluntary conversions, mandatory military slaves or mamlūks (who were of a non-Muslim background) and women who married Muslims had to convert, despite the Medīnan tradition, which prohibited compulsion.

As mentioned, during the late Seljuk and early Mongol periods, conversions among people in various trades, crafts, and administration reached record levels. Bedrosian indicates that the choice was obviously "prompted by the elevated status in the newly developing society converts could enjoy and especially financial inducements. The result was the creation with time of a distinct group—almost excluded from the Armenian sources, called renegades." As in the past, and similar to other non-Arab ethnic groups as well, the converts were always identified

as “Armenians”; they retained their ethnicity and a syncretistic form of Christian culture. There happened an “Armenization of the Seljuks” while the Armenians were still the majority in many parts of eastern Asia Minor.³

By the thirteenth century, an Armeno–Turkish and, generally, an Armeno–Muslim community had developed in Asia Minor, North-western Iran, Egypt, al-Shām, and Lower Mesopotamia. It was very common to find Christian ancestry and relations among the higher-ranking figures of all ethnicities. Similar to the Arab tribal amīrs earlier on, the Shah-i-Armans and the Seljuks married Armenian ladies of the nobility. These Muslims absorbed and consciously adopted many aspects of life, arts, and folklore from the Armenians in the midst of whom they settled. Similar to Fātimid architecture that was Armenized through Armenian builders, Seljuk architecture also was Armenized. Already by that time, Armenians had borrowed and elaborated the geometric patterns and Arabesque styles from Islamic arts. The subject of Islamic forms in Armenian arts and literature is a fascinating yet understudied area.

Shortly after the arrival of the Crusaders, Armenians began developing mixed attitudes toward the incoming Christians, depending on their locations and circumstances. Despite conflicting interests and the blatant hostility of the Crusaders toward the Christians of the East, most of the Cilician barons found natural allies in them.

Under these circumstances, in addition to Byzantine pressures for a church union, the Armenian Church also came under Latin pressure. A seemingly minor episode embodies the Armenian condition at the time and almost predicts the dilemma of the Armenian clergy. Matthew relates that in 1101, the Dānishmandid lord of Sivās (of a Georgian Armenian background, but now Muslim) and of the whole “Roman country” or Byzantine land marched on Melitene. The Lord of this city, the Chalcedonian Armenian Gabriel, immediately sought the assistance of the Crusaders and promised to hand over the city to them. A mixed contingent of Crusaders and Cilician Armenians arrived but were slaughtered by the Dānishmandids; their leaders were taken captive to Niksar or Neocaesarea. Two Armenian bishops were also killed in this uneven battle: They were Grigor, bishop of Mar’āsh, and Kyprianos, bishop of Antioch. Matthew explains that they were taken along due to the “very high regard” the Crusaders had for them.

In this and many other stories of the early years of Frankish expansion, Matthew refers to the Crusaders as the cause of evil, or “evil-doers”

and "plunderers" of Armenians. He recalls their shameful acts after being given Edessa by its governor T'oros (as discussed in Chapter 3).⁴ The story takes an even more interesting turn: In 1103/1104, Crusader Prince Bohemund was ransomed from the Muslim-Armenian Dānishmandids through the mediation of "great prince" Goł Vasil, whom Matthew had previously described as "renegade." Indeed, after inheriting most of the state of Philaretus, Goł Vasil assumed a leading role in the region and played significant roles in keeping not only his position but also some sort of a balance between the Turks, Crusaders, and Greeks. According to Matthew, he paid 10,000 *dahekans* to free the Crusader prince, whereas the Count of Antioch Tancred "gave nothing."⁵ Matthew changes paradigms in his narration of the events during these early periods of Crusader expansion and his description of the main actors on the stage. Thus, despite being a devout Christian, he lamented the death of Muslim-Armenian Dānishmandid Amīr Muḥammad I Gumishtekīn Ibn Tīlū Dānishmand in 1104/1105:

He was of the Armenian nation, a kind man, a benefactor and compassionate toward the Christians. There was great sorrow among the Christian faithful who were under his rule.⁶

B. The Zak'arids (or Zak'arians)

After the consecutive falls of their dynastic lands by the middle of the eleventh century, the Armenians dispersed in all directions. Some resorted to Georgia, which was then under Georgian-Bagratid Dawit' Šinoł (or builder), who was known for his Armenian sympathies. The Georgian-Bagratid dynasty reached its height under Queen T'amara (1184–1213). Between 1199 and 1205, the Georgians got as far as Dwin and Manazkert, which were traditionally under Arab control. Two Armenian generals, Zak'arē and Ivanē, led these operations. Between their Chalcedonian-Christian masters and Muslim neighbors, the Zak'arids had their own projects for a semi-independent Armenian land. Ivanē's daughter Tamta was married to the Shah-i-Arman amīr of Khlāt, thus securing some of Zak'arids' borders, while Zak'arē with his Armenian-Georgian troops advanced toward Julfa/Jugha through Azerbaijan.

A new phase of Armenian rule began in and around Georgia, as related by Kirakos Ganjakec'i, Step'anos Ōrbelean, and Vardan Arewelc'i. It was reflected in the thirteenth-century Georgian epic of *Man in the*

Panther's Skin.⁷ Zak'arē was the *amirspasalar* or commander in chief of the Georgian army as of 1191, and grand marshal in 1203. At first, Ivanē was vizier; then in 1212, he became *atabek*. (Atabeg, Atabek, or Atabey is a hereditary title of nobility of Turkic origin, indicating a governor of a nation or province who was subordinate to a monarch and charged with raising the crown prince.) This was a novel position that was introduced into the Georgian court at his request and gave him direct executive powers.

Between 1199 and 1203, the Georgian–Armenian armies spread to Amberd, Ani, Bĭni, and Dwin (all in the present republic), and generally in the locations recaptured from the Turks. The taxes were paid to the Zak'arids, who transferred them to the Georgians. Established at Ani, the Zak'arids also controlled Lori, Aragacotn, Bagrewand, Calkotn, Kogowit, Sumar, and the district of Erevan. The other nobles of Siwnik', the Ōrbeleans, Xaĭbakeank'-Brošeanĭ', and Dop'ean's became the subordinates of the Zak'arids.⁸ Fashioned after the Georgian model, the small Zak'arid dynasty in eastern Armenia fell to the Mongols in 1260. It was a brief yet economically prosperous and culturally dynamic period that continued for a while even after the fall of the Zak'arids. The peasantry had a higher measure of freedom and prospered. In addition to the new military nobility, a *mecatun* class developed as the earliest form of Armenian urban bourgeoisie. The mecatuns were mostly merchants, financiers, money lenders, and owners of large capitals.⁹ The names of the donors from this class appear in the inscriptions of many churches. In the cities in which the craftsmen were quasi-professional, coalitions were organized and developed into guilds during the later Mongol period.

C. Mongol Invasions and a New Phase in Asia Minor

Mongol invasions into the Caucasus region and Asia Minor began around the 1220s. After having defeated the Shāh of Khwarizm, the armies of Gengiz Khān were in western Naxiĭewan in 1221. They clashed with an Armenian–Georgian force of 10,000 led by the Georgian King Georgi IV (of Bagratuni descent, 1213–1223) and his *atabeg* Ivanē, who withdrew to the north.¹⁰ During the next year, after a second attack by the nomadic Kipchak Turks, a third and much bigger invasion was organized in 1225–1230. At the head of an ethnically diverse army of 60,000, the new Khwarizm Shāh the Ismā'īlī Jalāl ed-Dīn Mangūbirdī defeated Ivanē's army of 70,000. Ganĭak, Lori, and Tbilisi were devastated, and with the assistance of the local Muslims,

many Christians were massacred. Ivanē died in 1227. Some cities were retaken, but Jalāl ed-Dīn continued his operations until 1230, when a combined force of Malik Ashraf of Khlāt, the Franks, the Seljuk Sultan of Rūm, and Cilicians defeated him. The next year, he was assassinated by a Kurdish peasant.¹¹

In 1236, Chormaghun conducted the fourth invasion of Armenia, and brought in the herds, or Mongol "portable economy," the families, and Chinese war technology. Georgian Queen Rusudan (1223–1247) took refuge in more secure areas. The Zak'arid lands fell; Atabek Awag submitted to the Mongols and was rewarded. As vassals of the Mongols, the Armenians were required to take part in all their operations into the lands of their Muslim neighbors.

The other Armenian princes followed Awag's example and were reinstated to their positions. Ani and Kars were devastated. At the same time, northeastern Armenia was subjugated by either force or negotiations. The Mongols moved to the west and south. Between 1242 and 1245, western and southern parts of historic Armenia (then under the Seljuks) came under Mongol control. The few Ayyūbid lords could not resist this assault. In 1245, Erzinjān, Caesarea, Sivās, Melitene, Divrigi/Tephrike, Khlāt, Amīda, Edessa, and Nisibis fell into Mongol hands,¹² and with the exception of Cilicia, the entire Armenian population of eastern Asia Minor was under the Mongols.¹³

In 1248–1249, high taxes imposed by the Mongols caused unrest in many parts of Armenia and Georgia, but everywhere uprisings were very harshly dealt with. In 1254, Great Khan Mongke (1251–1259) ran a census and again raised taxes. As of 1256, the nobles of eastern Armenia were contributing Armenian–Georgian troops to all the military operations of the Mongol Ilkhanids, whose vast empire was established by Gengiz Khan's son Hulagu. In 1258/656H, the latter entered Baghdad, the capital of the 'Abbāsids, putting an end to the dynasty after 508 years of its rise in 750.

The Caucasus became a stage for the battles between the Ilkhanids and the Mongols of the Golden Horde from the lower Volga (the Golden Horde or the Zūchi-iin Ulus, in Mongolian, was a Turkicized Mongol khanate in the northwestern sector of the Mongol Empire; later, on it was known as the Kipchak Khanate.). Their leader Berke-Khān (1257–1266) had already converted to Islam. When in 1265–1266 the Golden Horde invaded the Caucasus, some of Gengiz Khan's descendants rebelled against the Ilkhanids, and Armenian–Georgian troops had to assist the Golden Horde¹⁴

Until that date, Armenians were in good terms with the Ilkhanids; during the early 1250s, Smbat Ōrbelean received a decree that exempted the Armenian Church and clergy from taxes, as was the custom in Muslim countries. The Monastery and Seminary of Tat'ew in Siwnik' were renovated with the help of Ilkhanid Baijū's Christian wife. The so-called Christianity of the Mongols is a controversial issue, as will be discussed next. The Mongols did not sympathize with the Muslims, because they stood before their imperialist project, and often used the Christians against them.¹⁵ The Armenian *mecatun* or merchant class also had its interests. They supported the Mongols for the protection of their caravans; in turn, the Mongols benefited from the profits of trade with the west and the Black Sea.¹⁶

Trade routes connected the Armenian power centers, so to speak. Otherwise, these locations were disconnected in many respects. The main route from the Mediterranean started at Ayas in Cilicia; it ran through Sivās, Erzincān, Erzurum/Karin, and Tabrīz/Dawrež in north-western Iran. There was another route that connected Tabriz to Trebizond on the Black Sea, running through Her/Xoy, Arčēš, Manazkert, and Erzurum. All sorts of goods moved between the east and west, north and south, and in all the cities through which the routes passed, Armenian merchants were involved in international trade. Some functioned as messengers for the Mongols, and others functioned as clerks and translators. A few centuries later, the scenario was repeated in New Julfa/Isfahan, India, Russia, and Europe at much larger scales. The Mongols created a class of lords with *inju* status who paid their taxes directly. By the instigation of the Mongols, they were in constant competition with each other. They were required to make journeys into Mongol headquarters in the Far East, and in their absence, the power vacuums allowed rivals to trespass and fight each other.¹⁷

Despite these manipulations, a distinct and, in many ways, positive social evolution was underway and continued during the Mongol period. New classes and careers came about, and the archaic feudal system lost ground. Furthermore, in the thirteenth century and the next, Armenian culture prospered because of the relatively secure status of the church, the resources of the remnants of the old nobility, and the new merchant class. Monastic institutions of the thirteenth century such as Ayrivank'/Gefard, Sanahin, Hałbat, Nor Getik, Gošavank', Xoranašat, Xor Virap, Keč'aris, and Glajor were the results.¹⁸ In many respects and at many levels, Armenian intellectual culture and architecture, in particular, saw a unique revival, a renaissance

of sorts through these monasteries and their schools, some of which are described as "universities." We shall refer to the School of Tat'ew in Volume Three.

The gradual conversion of the Mongols led to their complete Islamization. The conversion of Ghazan Khan (1295–1304) and generally his reign caused a watershed not only in Mongol but also in Near Eastern and Armenian histories. His brother and successor Öljeitü or Muḥammad Khudābandah (1304–1316) raised the taxes and initiated persecutions against the Christians everywhere. Among others, for example, in 1320, Bishop Grigor of Theodosiopolis was killed for refusing to convert to Islam. Eventually, as in many previous periods, Christians were required to wear something blue (a badge, a kerchief, or a hat) to be distinguished from Muslims.¹⁹

Religious intolerance ran parallel to economic and social deterioration in the Ilkhanid Empire. Competition for power and internal strife caused the devastation of many parts of Armenia and the collapse of the old nobility, some of whom converted.²⁰ The rest of the fourteenth century saw conflicts between the Kara Koyunlu (Black Sheep) Turkmens and the Ottomans (who were a part of the Ghuzz/Oghuz tribes that had arrived in the eleventh century and proliferated). They emerged as the strongest group and controlled parts of western Armenia, Sivās, Erzinjān, and Melitene. In 1385, Khan Tokhtamish of the Golden Horde moved from Derbend to Azerbaijan, plundered Naxijewan, and withdrew.²¹

D. The Hypothesis of "Mongol Imperial Ideology"

Before proceeding any further, a very intriguing hypothesis should be introduced here as one of the paradigms in order to understand the fourteenth century in the region, and perhaps contemporary history as well. R. Amitai-Preiss argues that the principle to understand Mongol–Mamlūk politics is their "Imperial Ideology." This is the legacy of the initial Gengizid *yasa*, or the corpus of laws attributed to him to conquer the world from "sea to sea."

On the ground, after conquering eastern Asia Minor, next on the Mongol agenda were al-Shām and Mamlūk Egypt. Their invasions into al-Shām began in 1260. There were consecutive campaigns in 1281, 1299, 1300, 1303, and 1312. The plan was first to take al-Shām from the Mamlūks, and since they were still non-Muslim until 1300, they found allies in the remaining Crusader states, and their vassals Georgian and Cilician Armenians. Ghazan Khan sent two letters to the pope in

1300 and 1302, and to the kings of England and France in 1302 and 1303; other embassies also followed this trend. The Mongols wanted to involve the Christians of the entire region in a joint project for the conquest of Syria and Egypt, with the promise to give them a share in the victory. The objective, according to Amitai-Preiss, was to

... draw the Western leaders into a joint campaign against the Mamlūks. In return, the Christians were offered control of the Holy Land; additional incentives were the expressions of sympathy for the Christians and the mentioning of the good treatment of Christians in the Ilkahnid kingdom.²²

Access to the Mediterranean may have been an objective of the Mongols, as it was of the Turks before them. However, as Amitai-Preiss observes, they already had passages through Cilicia and Rūm Seljuk, both "Mongol client-states."²³ It is not difficult to see that throughout, all operations were propelled by "Mongol imperial ideology," or a purely Turkic-Mongol project to conquer the world, so to speak. From the time of Gengizid invasions, says Amitai-Preiss, this ideal "remained the official ideology of the Ilkhanid state." As masters and conquerors, they looked down on the Mamlūks as "slaves" not fit to rule,²⁴ and in a typically Oriental style, they looked down on the Arabs and all the natives of the region. The word *ṣulḥ* or peace treaty (in Arabic) means *submission* or *surrender* in the Mongol political dictionary. In fact, for the Mongols, the only way to achieve peace was through total subjugation.²⁵

It seems that once again, similar to the Turks before them, the Mongols also used the "Islamic rationale to justify" their offensive behavior.²⁶ This was the motive behind their conversion to Islam. Mongol imperial ideology was explicit in the images of their converted leaders who were now the zealous leaders of the Islamic world. Despite his proclaimed Islam, Ghazan Khan, and probably his successors as well, adhered to the *yasa*. There is nothing in common between Islam and *yasa*. The Ilkhanids were faithful to the legacy of their ancestors and the Gengizid imperialist ideal. However, despite the rhetoric and the force of the ideology, the Mongols were defeated in 1303 by the Mamlūks at Marj al-Safar, south of Damascus. In 1304, Ghazan's brother Khudābandah sent a letter of reconciliation to Cairo, soon after his accession to the throne, probably to gain some time to reorganize his forces.²⁷ After 'Ayn Jalūt, it took the Mongols sixty years "to realize that they could not defeat the Mamlūks and to abandon finally the ideal of Mongol imperial destiny," says Amitai-Preiss.²⁸

I will refer to Mamlūk–Cilician history a little later in this chapter. From the beginning, Armenians in Cilicia allied with the Latins and the Christians of the region. They had their own perspectives and interests in Mongol invasions into al-Shām, and saw Mongol incursions as retaliatory and not imperialistic measures.²⁹ They even wanted to use the circumstances to involve the Latin world in a new crusade. To gain legitimacy, the Crusaders also had used religious reasons against the Muslim “infidels.” Cilicians addressed the westerners from the perspective of a possible Frankish–Mongol–Armenian alliance for a new crusade. As in the case of the Franks earlier, Mongol imperial ideology had little, if anything, to do with religion, be it Christianity or Islam. For the Armenians, the motives seemed to make a little difference, but the price of their anti-Muslim alliances was very high.

III. Cilicia Paradigm Case between the East and the West

A. Four Points as an Introduction to the Cilician Case

As an introduction to this section on Cilicia, four points should be made about the Armenian condition at the time. The first point is that as of the campaigns of Emperor Tzimiskes before the last quarter of the tenth century into al-Shām through Cilicia, the stage was set for a crusader-style Christian politics. He presented the Syrian expedition as a virtual crusade to “liberate,” as he claimed, the holy land and its people from the infidels. This motif was to be also maintained by the Armenians in Cilicia for almost four centuries, even after the erosion of the Crusader states,

The fusion of the “sword and cross” is the second point. The motif was already central to Armenian culture as the legacy of the War of Vardananc’ in 451 between the Armenians and Sassanids, as discussed in Volume One. Within the first few years after the arrival of the Crusaders, both the Crusader and Byzantine images of “pious Christian conquerors and saviors of Christians” were shattered. However, still, the compounded concept of the “sword and cross” and/or “warrior and monk” shaped the paradigms of Christian rulership in Armenia, Cilicia, Constantinople, Georgia, Antioch, and Jerusalem. It is in this spirit and perspective that medieval Armenian chroniclers such as Elišē, Lewond, T’ovma Arcruni, Aristakēs, Ōrbelean, and Urhayec’i wrote their histories. Similar to Crusader knights, many Byzantine emperors and Armenian kings, princes, and rulers were “warrior-monks” and ceded their throne to become monks at the end of their careers.

The third point is related to the context in which these events were narrated and interpreted by many Armenian historians. Armenians in Cilicia and in the entire region were not novelties, but Armenian rule was new over very vital regions of eastern and coastal Asia Minor such as Erznka and Cilicia. As the Greeks, Arabs, Turks, Mongols, and even the Franks considered themselves conquerors and, hence, rightful owners of these locations, so did the Armenians. In fact, most Armenian and Syrian historians saw that the new land of Cilicia was simply a replacement after Byzantium had occupied their native country and driven them to the west and south. The Cilicians also believed that Cilicia was a “gift of God” to them. P. Eghiayan cites many passages from different authors who express this idea.³⁰

In addition to the demographic and ideological precedents, there is a fourth factor that is seldom discussed. This is the diasporic context of things Cilician. Armenian rule over territories outside the traditional mainland was a new phenomenon and paradigm at that. Seeing themselves as the rightful owners and rulers of the new locations, the Armenians in Cilicia fought to survive and flourish as natives. The resumption of life in new circumstances and in a new world of their own drastically modernized the Armenian political mind, and almost immediately, deep differences in outlook and practice developed between the Cilicians in the west and the Armenians in the east, or between the western and eastern Armenians. I will deal with this subject later on in the study.

B. Factors in the Making of Armenian Cilicia

Cilicia was the first organized and longest-lasting Armenian entity outside the mainland. It is unique in all respects, and the application of traditional approaches will fail to evaluate this phenomenon. As A. Stewart says, “concentrating on the heroic (or anti-heroic)” figures and episodes, as many do in Armenian histories even at present, betrays a “lack of understanding of the complexities of the realpolitik in the Middle East and Near East”³¹ during those centuries.

Since Roman times, the region has been a part of the Armenian habitat, and has even been called by some as “lower” Armenia. Situated on the southwestern periphery of Greater Armenia, on the northeastern corner of the Mediterranean Cilicia was a plane crossed by rivers, enclosed by the Taurus in the west and the Amanus in the east. As discussed in Chapter 3, already during the tenth century, the Byzantine upsurge in the east and south brought many Armenians

into Cilicia, Antioch, and the Orontes in the south. Soon after the fall of the dynastic principalities and Turkish penetration, before the middle of the eleventh century, the key mountain locations, the Cilician and Syrian Gates, vital passages and fortresses on the Taurus and Amanus, and the Euphrates between the north and the south, between the east and the west were either inhabited by Armenians or were in Armenian hands, both orthodox and heterodox. By the last decade of the eleventh century, the broader region of Cilicia was almost completely Armenized. Already as of the 1040s, there were Armenian and other clans with territorial rights. Abū'l-Gharib (Abīlārib, originally an azat of the Arcrunis) was a Byzantine-appointed governor over the southern side of the Cilician Gates on the Taurus. Around 1070, the pro-Byzantine Het'umids (originally from Ganja or Ganjak in northeastern Armenia) settled in the fortresses of Lambron and Babaron, and another clan known as the Nathanaels were in Asgouras. Antioch already had a large Armenian community, and several of its Byzantine governors were Armenian. There were orthodox Armenians, Chalcedonian Armenians, Muslim Armenians, political converts, and "renegades." However, all, including the Rubenids and the Het'umids, were pragmatic and ruthless people of a military background with little ideological or moral concerns. Speaking of the warlords of these times, De Morgan says,

Men of violent character, with few scruples as to their means of achieving their ends, these nobles managed by degrees to rally under them all the chiefs of around Parjrbert.³²

The emergence of the Rubenid or the Rubinian Barony in Cilicia is traditionally linked to the assassination of the last Bagratuni King Gagik II and the dispersion of his cavalry of azats. One of these azats, Ruben (1080–1095) and his clan occupied a fortress in Gobidara on the hills north of the fortress city and the future capital Sis. His son and successor Kostandin (1095–1100) seized the fortress of Vahka on the Taurus, a key position on the main route between Adana in the south and Upper Cappadocia in the north.³³ Kostandin's son T'oros I (1100–1129) managed to exercise some kind of a control over the Vahka and Barjrbert fortress towns.³⁴ As the Rubenids expanded their territories, they inevitably stood in positions of conflict with the Byzantine-backed Het'umids in Lambron in the west. The latter were vassals of Byzantium and border guards over the eastern frontiers of

the empire. When the Rubenids arrived in the region with plans of their own, the conflict was inevitable. During these stormy decades, the Armenian Catholicosate, exiled from Ani in 1045, was also trying to find a secure location in the same broader region of Cilicia and northwest al-Shām.

In 1095, Pope Urban II (1088–1099) proclaimed the First Crusade and set two goals: liberation of the eastern churches and the Christian peoples from the Muslims, and, more importantly, the recovery of Jerusalem, the holiest place for Christendom.³⁵ The First Crusade appeared in Asia Minor around 1097 and with the exception of Het'umid lands in west Cilicia and Rubenid lands in its east, Antioch, Edessa, and other locations fell to the Crusaders already during the first decades of the twelfth century.

On October 21, 1097, the Crusaders reached Antioch, and the battle and siege lasted till February 1098. As mentioned, a Muslim Armenian, a “renegade” called Firūz was directly involved in the fall of the city. Ma'arrat al-Nu'mān just south of Aleppo fell on December 11–12, 1098, and the Crusaders moved south along the coast into Palestine. They passed the Ma'multayn River north of Beirut and continued to Tyre/Şūr in the south. On June 7, 1099, they arrived before the walls of Jerusalem. On July 22, 1100, Godfrey of Bouillon was elected ruler of the new Crusader settlement in Jerusalem, and he celebrated Christmas in Jerusalem.³⁶ The Kingdom of Jerusalem started at the Ma'multayn River, and it included Beirut and the entire coast southward to Palestine.³⁷ In addition to the pope, the monarchs of France, Germany, and England were the supreme leaders of the Crusaders.³⁸

C. The Cilician Principality between the Turks and the Franks

When the Crusaders appeared in Asia Minor, and less than two decades after their appearance in Cilicia, the Rubenids immediately went to their assistance, probably seeing in them natural allies. Despite conflict of interests, Frankish brutality, and ambitions, all Cilician princes/kings maintained this alliance till the end of the kingdom in 1375. In 1098, Prince Kostandin I (1095–1100) took part in the siege of Antioch, and his principality seemed to be a part of the “feudal organization of the Crusaders” set against the Muslims.³⁹ Despite changes in circumstances and occasional Cilician–Muslim alliances, the Muslims always looked at the Cilicians, their state, and their church from this perspective.

From the 1110s to the 1120s, as the Rubenids were expanding their territories and assisting the Crusaders, and the latter were continuing their politics of the acquisition of Armenian lands and property. The Crusader knights were so abusive and oppressive that in some locations the Armenians preferred the Muslims to the Franks and invited the former to free them from Frankish oppression.⁴⁰

As was the case with the introduction of Islam in Asia Minor and Armenia, the introduction of Western elements paved the way for a new culture. Armenians, those in Cilicia in particular, came into contact and closely interacted with these westerners at all levels. They were exposed to the Latin religious culture through missionaries and Crusader knights (Templars, Hospitaliers, and the Teutonic). French and Italian cultures, languages, practices, and traditions were adopted in the trade and administration. As just mentioned, Western exposure in Cilicia deepened the divergences between east-Armenian and west-Armenian cultures. Although they were implicit in the two sides of the Armenian world—because of geographical and historical differences—these differences became conspicuous during the twelfth century and continued till the present day.

In eastern Cilicia, between 1080 and 1137, Ruben (1080–1095), his son Kostandin I (1095–1100), the latter's son T'oros I (1100–1129), and Lewon I (1129–1137), T'oros's son, were occupying key locations on the Syrian Gates. Since alliances were formed between the Franks and local Christians, the Muslim powers on the opposite side became enemies of both. However, alliances were never constant, and it was very common to find Greeks, Franks, and Armenians fighting each other in alliance with Muslims. During the early decades of the twelfth century, the Rubenids and Het'umids, even the renegade Goł Vasil, who was the successor of Philaretus, joined the Christian alliance, but after his death in 1116, his wife collaborated with the Muslims and his adopted son/nephew Tlay Vasil became the victim of the Christian alliance.

Whenever Cilicians made an attempt to expand their territories, they became targets, for either the Dānishmandids in their north or the Franks in the east and south. On their part, they reacted and matched their enemies in violence. In 1136, Raymond of Antioch made an attempt to invade the Cilician plane, and the next year, in 1137, the Greeks captured Cilicia and sent prince Lewon I and his family to Constantinople, where they all died with the exception of T'oros, who was back in Cilicia in 1145.

The southeastern neighbor, Aleppo had a powerful governor, the Atabek 'Imād ed-Dīn Zankī, connected to the Atabeks of Moṣul. He was known for his jihādīst disposition toward the Christianization of western and northern parts of al-Shām. In Asia Minor, equally hostile Dānīshmandids and Rūm Seljuks of Iconium enclosed Cilicia from the north. Nominally, their Christian allies, the Franks and Greeks, resented the Armenians and the creation of a sovereign and powerful Armenian state in Cilicia. These were the circumstances of the Cilicians in their early phase, at least.

Gradually, by mid-century, the Atabeks of Moṣul presented a serious threat. The last Count of Edessa Joscelin II could not resist Turkish pressure and on December 24, 1144, the city—the population of which was predominantly Armenian—fell to the Zankīs of Moṣul. Joscelin went to Tall Bāshir and two years later, died there. This was the first Frankish defeat and is believed to have caused the Second Crusade (1147–1149). In 1146, after the death of 'Imād ed-Dīn Zankī, the state was divided between his two sons: Nūr ed-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn Zankī took Aleppo and its surroundings, and Sayf ed-Dīn Ghāzī took Moṣul and its surroundings. In 1149, Nūr ed-Dīn besieged Antioch but failed to capture it. The conflict with the Zankīs of Aleppo kept the Cilicians occupied for many years.

Having escaped from Constantinople, Prince T'oros arrived in Cilicia a year after the fall of Edessa in 1044, amid Armenian disappointment with both the Franks and Byzantines. Already having the support of the pro-Rubenids, he managed to gather troops to recover Rubenid lands. He married the daughter of Prince Simon of Ra'bān, one of the vassals of Joscelin of Edessa, and Armenian–Frankish marriages became a social–political tradition that lasted till the end of the kingdom. By 1150, the Rubenid principality or Barony took shape in Cilicia.

In 1150, a strategic alliance was struck between Turkish Nūr ed-Dīn Zankī of Aleppo and Sultan Mas'ūd of Iconium. It led not only to the division of the territories of the principality of Edessa (fallen in 1144) among them, but also to the creation of a hostile bracket north and east of Cilicia. In 1154, Nūr ed-Dīn managed to annex Damascus and became the most powerful figure in al-Shām. In the autumn of 1150, assisted by the Crusader forces, Byzantine armies penetrated into the Euphrates and took Tall Bāshir, Delūk, Ayntāb, and Rawandān, but were driven away by Nūr ed-Dīn. Two years later, in 1152, Cilicia came under attack by an army led by Andronikos Komnenos (grandson

of Emperor Alexios I Komnenos), who stopped at Mamistra. Twice, in 1152 and 1155, the Byzantines turned to the Seljuks of Iconium and incited them against the Cilicians. In 1156, through a treaty with the Crusader Kingdom of Antioch, T'oros secured his southern frontiers.⁴¹

This alliance, however, required more commitments from the Armenians. When in 1157 the news of the illness of Nūr ed-Dīn of Aleppo encouraged Baldwin III of Antioch to organize a campaign, T'oros had to join him.⁴² Armenian and Frankish troops moved to Shayzar, the lords of which were the Ibn Munqidhs (who at the time had lost their fortress to Nūr ed-Dīn). Disagreement among the Franks led to the disintegration of the campaign and their withdrawal.⁴³ In 1158, Emperor Manuel I Komnenos (1143–1180) was again on the western borders of Cilicia and settled on the plane in Mamistra. The campaign ended, however, by the mediation between the Greeks and Cilicians that was brought about by King Baldwin III of Jerusalem. In 1159, a treaty was signed, and an alliance was formed between the Greeks, Franks, and Cilicians against Nūr ed-Dīn. Before returning to Constantinople, Manuel, however, instigated Nūr ed-Dīn against the Sultanate of Iconium, and comfortably reinstalled his control over the Cilician plane till the year 1173.⁴⁴

In 1162, the final break between the Armenians and Byzantines occurred, when the latter treacherously murdered Prince Step'anē, a brother of T'oros. However, the strategic alliance between the Armenians and Franks was maintained, and T'oros had amicable ties with King Amaury I of Jerusalem. During 1262–1264, he made a pilgrimage to the Holy City and finding the number of the Christian inhabitants greatly diminished, he was said to have offered to send a force of 30,000 Armenians with their families to Jerusalem. It seems that the project was discarded after the Franks expected these Armenians to convert to Catholicism.⁴⁵ In 1167, Cilicia, an explicitly pro-Frankish barony, was called the "Land of T'oros." Its western frontiers began at Korykos and ended at the Syrian Gates. In 1169, T'oros chose to become a monk⁴⁶ and inaugurated a tradition of warrior-monks in the Cilician nobility after the model of the Crusader Knights.

A parenthesis should be opened here about the Armenian condition at this time in both the north and the south. Between 1154 and 1162, while alliances were changing in the north and Nūr ed-Dīn was unsuccessfully trying to break into Crusader strongholds on the coast, the Armenian Nuṣayrī vizier Ṭalā'ī Ruzzik in Fāṭimid Egypt was

encouraging the Zankīs and volunteering to drive the “infidels” and “pigs” from Muslim land. At the same time, the Cilician Armenians were the most important allies of these “infidels” and “pigs,” taking part in all their campaigns against the Muslims. Furthermore, in al-Shām and Upper Mesopotamia, the Muslim–Armenian Dānishmandids and the Seljuks of Iconium, in turn, were fighting the Crusaders and the Byzantines, occasionally their Armenian compatriots as well. A few minor principalities were still left on the mainland, and soon, the Zak’arids would establish their Georgian–Armenian dynasty. It should be obvious by now that the events of these times and most, if not all, paradigms of interaction totally cancel traditional and modernistic arguments in favor of a distinct and unbroken Armenian “ideology,” “policy,” and/or “identity.”

D. Prince Mleh and His Zankī Alliance: A Counter-Paradigm and the Nāwiki/Yāruqī Connection

The name of Mleh (Mliḥ in Arab histories), a brother of T’oros, appears for the first time in the context of a Frankish–Armenian campaign in Ḥārim, between Aleppo and Antioch on August 11, 1164/ Ramaḍān 2, 559. At the time, Cilicia was a relatively young principality struggling for a foothold between Byzantium, the Sultanate of Iconium, the Dānishmandids, the Crusaders of Antioch, and the Zankīs of Syria. Ananun Edeseac’i (the Anonymous Historian of Edessa) related that on that day, Constantine Coloman, the Byzantine governor of the Cilician Plain, Bohemund III Prince of Antioch, Raymond the Count of Tripoli, and Cilician princes T’oros and his brother Mleh clashed with the forces of Nūr ed-Dīn near the fortress of Ḥārim. The battle ended with their defeat. Many, including princes and knights, fell captive. According to Edeseac’i, only the two Cilician brothers could escape.⁴⁷ While the defeat is a fact, the larger story has several versions.

Mleh (the youngest son of Lewon) who initially was not taken to Constantinople with his family, was a violent yet a very competent man, similar to most of the Cilician and other Armenian warlords of the period. In Syria, he first joined the Knights Templar for a while, and after the battle of Ḥārim, he seems to have stayed in the region. Ibn al-‘Adīm makes no mention of T’oros in his story of this battle. He narrates that during this failed campaign, 10,000 people perished, and many fell captive. He then says that of all the Christian prisoners, only Mleh was treated differently, and he explains that

Mliḥ Ibn Lawūn’ was set free because the Yāruqiyah [in charge of guarding the prisoners], released him and allowed him to go, because he [Mleh] was their uncle [*khāluhum*, or maternal uncle].⁴⁸

It seems, therefore, that Mleh must have married a Nāwīkī/Yārūkī lady in Syria after a while, and after his release, he did not return home. At any rate, he was not on good terms with his brother; he joined Zankī Nūr ed-Dīn, converted to Islam, and was appointed lord of Cyrrhus/Qawras.⁴⁹

According to the version reconstructed by Ghewont Alishan, seeing the inevitability of defeat, T’oros simply deserted the battlefield, whereas Mleh continued to fight. When he fell captive, he was released with the help of some “Turkmen tribesmen called Yarukis,” as he puts it.⁵⁰ He makes no references to the absolutely intriguing fragment of information about Mleh saved by Ibn al-‘Adīm. According to Michael the Syrian, on the spectacular defeat at Hārim, T’oros began contacts with Nūr ed-Dīn to liberate the prisoners, but with no success.⁵¹ Only in 1167, while Nūr ed-Dīn was busy in the south, he wanted to ease matters in the north and released the prisoners. He gave Behesni, Kaysūm, and Mar’ash back to Kilij Arslan of Iconium and adopted a more neutral policy toward Byzantium.⁵²

Mleh is best known for his alliance with the Turkish Zankīs. As mentioned, his realpolitik with the Turks began even before his conversion to Islam. He enrolled in the administration of Nūr ed-Dīn Zankī and became the governor of Qawras—his *iqṭā’*—just north of Killis on the river ‘Afrin, which was on the border of Cilicia. Rawandān was at its north, and the Amanus was located at its west. Earlier, it had belonged to Bagarat, a brother of Goṯ Vasil. Even though the conversion of Mleh and his marriage to a Nāwīkī woman are common knowledge among Arab authors, L. Tēr Petrosean seems to have overlooked this very peculiar aspect of Mleh’s life and career, and says that Mleh was “the only Christian to be granted such a favor, not counting the Islamized Armenians.”⁵³ In general, Mleh is as much a part of Cilician history as he is of what I call the *Armenian Intermezzo* in Bilād al-Shām. In general, the case of Cilicia should be studied in the Near Eastern context before any other, and this has not been the case.

According to V. Tēr Lewondean, Mleh was sent to Qawras—a predominantly Armenian city—to reconstruct it after the invasion of Manuel Komnenos in 1158–1159.⁵⁴ He was at Qawras when he received the news of the death of his brother Prince T’oros and the

appointment of the latter's infant son Ruben (II) as heir. Mleh could now rule legitimately as the closest relative and at least as regent of the heir to the throne. The infant already had a Latin regent called Thomas.

Mleh marched to Cilicia at the head of a large Turkmen force provided by Nūr ed-Dīn. Thomas fled to Antioch, and Ruben was taken to safety in Hromkla, the rock island fortress in the Euphrates, where the Catholicosate had finally settled just before 1150.⁵⁵ According to the Armenian version of the *Chronicle* of Michael the Syrian, after this initial invasion, Mleh withdrew, but when the Armenians heard of preparations by the Zankī to invade Cilicia, they invited Mleh back as a compromise and on the basis of a promise he had made not to harm the heir to the throne who was kept at Hromkla.⁵⁶ Soon, however, the infant was killed, and Mleh was blamed.

As always with Nūr ed-Dīn's assistance, Mleh defeated an imperial army led by Michael Vranas and Constantine Coloman and freed the Cilician plains and the coast under Byzantine control. As required, he sent most of the war booties and thirty Greek and probably Armenian dignitaries who had fallen captive to Nūr ed-Dīn. The latter, in turn, dispatched them to the 'Abbāsid caliph in Baghdad. Apart from the contradictory versions of the story of Mleh and the details, the significance of this formidable figure as a paradigm should not be overlooked. Mleh made a deliberate political choice between the east and the west; his conversion was a part of his policy, similar to the figures and cases discussed in Chapter 3. He was an exact contemporary of many Muslim Armenians in the larger region at the time. Consequently, in the eyes of the Zankīs or the Fātimids, he was not a novelty but very much a part of the Near Eastern political scene at the time.

Furthermore, a point that should not be missed is that Mleh clearly reversed the Cilician alliance with the Christian side. His project would move Cilicia into the Zankī camp against the Christian Byzantines and Crusaders. This strategic reorientation was a new Armenian condition. Mleh acted as an ally to his assassination in 1175, of not only Nūr ed-Dīn but also Kilij Arslan of Iconium and Dānishmandid Ibn Muḥammad II of Cappadocia. In 1171–1172, and for the first and only time, Cilicia was a part of the Muslim camp.

Mleh's realpolitik with the Turks—be they the Zankīs, the Seljuks, or the Dānishmandids—is another case of Armenian easternizing-Islamophile politics against the Latinophilia and Hellenophilia of many figures in the nobility as well as the church. He clearly stands with the heterodox figures and factions such as Philaretus, the Dānishmandids,

the Boghusaks, the Fāṭimid Armenians, and many others during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. His short but stormy and decisive term is also a part of what I call the medieval Armenian–Turkish realpolitik. Indeed, the case of Mleh—essentially a prince from a pro-Frankish Cilician House of the Rubenids—was peculiar. Some medieval Arab historians have wondered about the relationship between Mleh and Nūr ed-Dīn. According to Ibn al-ʿAdīm, Nūr ed-Dīn simply

... used [*istakh dama*] Mliḥ Ibn Lawūn, *malik al-arman* [king/lord of the Armenians]. He gave [Mliḥ] territories [*aqīa'ahu*] in the land of the Muslims [*min bilād al-Islām*] and accompanied him in many wars and assisted him [*anjadahu*] that year [1172–3/568] with a group of his own troops [*ʿaskar*]. Mliḥ entered Adana, Ṭarṣūs, and al-Maṣṣīṣah, and took them from the Byzantine emperor; he then sent to Nūr ed-Dīn a great quantity of the spoils and thirty of their [Greek] notables [*a'yān*] as captives.⁵⁷

Mleh led Turkmen troops provided by the Zankī into his native country. He tried to attack Lambron but failed, returned to the east, drove the Antiochenes and the Templars from the fortresses of the Amanus, and captured the Byzantine governor Constantine Coloman. Cilicia, under Mleh, became a pro-Zankī Armenian principality. The most significant achievement of Mleh's policies and actions was the liberation of the Cilician plains and coastal towns from the Greeks and driving the Franks away.

Between 1160 and 1170, the Dānishmandids themselves were under pressure from the Seljuks of Iconium and sought the assistance of both Nūr ed-Dīn and the Greeks. In 1172, Dānishmandid Amīr Ismā'il was killed, and Dhū'l-Nūn rose in Sivās. Taking advantage of the confusion, when Kilij Arslan II of Iconium attacked Sivās, Dhū'l-Nūn took refuge with his father-in-law Nūr ed-Dīn in Aleppo. In June 1173, Nūr ed-Dīn invaded the territories of the Rūm Seljuks in Kaysūm, Behesni, and Mar'ash, and reached Sivās, where he restored Dhū'l-Nūn. Being a part of the Zankī camp, Cilicia, under Mleh, was now an ally of the Dānishmandids against Iconium. Until the death of Nūr ed-Dīn in 1174, Dhū'l-Nūn and Mleh were safe, but soon afterward, Kilij Arslan II put an end to the Dānishmandids.⁵⁸

In 1173, Mleh declared Sis the capital of his principality. It remained this way till the fall of Cilicia to the Mamlūks in 1375. After the Mamlūk invasion of Hromkla in 1293, the Catholicosate also moved to Sis until the second and final evacuation orders by the Ottomans in 1921. It was

during the term of Mleh that Catholicos Nersēs Šnorhali died in 1173 at Hromkla. The stories about his succession—credible or not—are, in turn, symbolic of the times. According to Michael the Syrian, on his deathbed, Šnorhali gave his pontifical ring to Grigor Apirat, who was to become his successor. However, Grigor Tlay, who claimed to be the successor by Šnorhali's deliberate choice, asked assistance from Nūr ed-Dīn, probably on the basis of advice from Mleh. The Zankī is said to have imposed the election of Grigor IV Tlay (1173–1193), who was said to have paid Nūr ed-Dīn 50,000 dinārs. This is just a story, and it is not even clear whether this was an annual tribute or just a one-time expression of his gratitude. However, one thing is certain that Grigor Tlay always kept good relations and open channels with the Eastern Armenians, the Muslims, as well as the Byzantines and the Latins.⁵⁹

On his part, during 1173, Mleh turned to the Knights Templar on the Amanus, where they had settled on Rubenid lands as of 1156. Baghras or Gaston was a particularly important location for the Franks, who at the time were trying to organize a front against the Zankī coalition. On the request of King Amaury I of Jerusalem, Bohemund III of Antioch marched to Cilicia, but Nūr ed-Dīn's forces intercepted that army at Karak, and Mleh was spared. According to William of Tyre, Mleh rejected several requests to meet the Franks to reach some sort of an agreement with them. He was very powerful and was well supported.⁶⁰

The emotional shock that Mleh's politics caused among Armenians was predictable, but regionally, he scored a huge success. Emperor Manuel had to sign a peace treaty with the Armenians, whom he had brutally crushed earlier on, and yielded Cilicia to Mleh in 1173. The move practically cleared the Cilician plain and the coast of both the Franks and the Greeks. However, Mleh's massacres of his compatriots, conversion to Islam, and alliances led to his violent death in 1175. He was buried in the Monastery of Meck'ar, near Mar'ash.⁶¹

As mentioned, Mleh was, in fact, a part of a tradition of Muslim–Armenian alliances maintained by mostly heterodox and dissident figures and trends. Similar to the Rubenids and before them Philaretus and Goṯ Vasil, he had no religious scruples and was keen on creating a safe and sovereign Armenian land. The Rubenid project was a Latin–Armenian state, whereas his was a pro–Muslim–Armenian state in the face of both the Greeks and the Franks. His project, as he saw it, could only be realized through a Muslim alliance. Exactly hundred years after Philaretus, this was a second yet bolder experiment in view of heavily

militant Frankish and Byzantine presence in the region. Putting a final end to Byzantine involvement in Cilicia,⁶² Mleh's politics stood in direct contradiction to the pro-Latin Rubenid–Het'umid project despite the explicitly anti-Armenian politics of both the Franks and Byzantium.

Finally, yet another aspect of Armenian history is connected to the episode of Mleh, which also seems to have gone undetected. In 1071/567H, while Cilicia was in precarious circumstances, Caliph al-Ādid, the last Fāṭimid Caliph, was assassinated, and the Ayyūbids launched a program of eradicating the rival Armenian element in Egypt. Avoiding persecution, many Armenians resorted to Cilicia, which was then under pro-Muslim Mleh. Tens of thousands settled there, because Cilicia was the closest as well as a safe haven for them. It did not matter who ruled there. Just as in the past, fleeing before the Seljuks, many migrated to Fāṭimid Egypt, where a powerful Muslim Armenian, Badr was in control. Earlier on, in the north, another "renegade" Philaretus provided a safe haven to his compatriots. The relationship between Armenian political evolution in the Islamic world and persistence is another intriguing yet understudied theme.

E. Cilicia and the Ayyūbids

As of the late 1160s, the Kurdish Ayyūbids were working toward a dynasty on the ruins of the Fāṭimid Caliphate. Finally, Ṣalāḥ ed-Dīn Ibn Ayyūb (Saladin in Crusader and Western sources) founded the Ayyūbid dynasty, and it lasted almost eighty years, from 1171/567H to 1250/648H. This was a new development that affected the entire Near East, including the Crusaders and Armenians.

When Ruben III (1175–1187), the eldest son of Mleh's brother Step'anē, became Great Prince of Cilicia (after the liquidation of Mleh), the region had already changed. Egypt, Syria, and Upper Mesopotamia were gradually falling under Ayyūbid control, and Cilicia was next on Ṣalāḥ ed-Dīn's agenda. In 1174, in Syria, Nūr ed-Dīn died; had he lived longer, Mleh would have survived his enemies.

During the term of Ruben III, Cilicia did not immediately come into a direct encounter with the Ayyūbids. The Crusaders, however, were in a state of high alert. A failed attempt was made in 1177–1178 by a Christian coalition to capture the fortress of Ḥārim, a strategically important point for the Franks, and Ruben III was probably a part of the operation.⁶³ He was pro-Latin and had married Isabel, the daughter of Humphrey III of Karak, who was linked to the Kingdom of Jerusalem.

When he wanted to get rid of the Turkmens left over from his uncle Mleh's term, Şalāḥ ed-Dīn marched toward Cilicia in 1180. Ruben III returned the Turkmen captives and paid a large tribute in gold to Şalāḥ ed-Dīn. Peace was concluded, at least temporarily, with Cilicia, but soon, Ruben III recovered many locations taken by the Ayyūbids.

In the southeast, after the death of al-Malik al-Şālīḥ of Aleppo in 1181–1182/577, his brother 'Izz ed-Dīn Mas'ūd annexed Aleppo to his principality of Moşul, but in 1183, the city fell to the Ayyūbids. In al-Shām, with the exception of the coast and some of Palestine mostly under Crusaders, Şalāḥ ed-Dīn was in total control. He also contributed to the rise of anti-Christian feelings, when he issued a decree forbidding the infidels or the Christians riding horses and mules and required them to wear a distinctive belt.⁶⁴ Fortified in Aleppo, the Ayyūbids threatened Tripoli, Antioch, and Cilicia. In the meantime, Ruben III took Țarşūs peacefully, moved to the west, and, finally, subjugated the pro-Byzantine Het'umids. At the instigation of the latter, Bohemund of Antioch invited Ruben to Antioch, imprisoned him, and initiated an attack on Cilician cities. Ruben was released only after an agreement to give the Franks some locations and large sums of money.⁶⁵ According to Michael the Syrian, after his return, Ruben recovered these locations,⁶⁶ and in 1185, Cilicia was a sovereign land. Despite rising tensions, the position of Rubenid Cilicia between the Seljuks, Ayyūbids, Franks, Greeks, and the Het'umids was surprisingly strong.⁶⁷ In 1187, similar to his uncle T'oros, Ruben also became a monk, and withdrew to the monastery of Drazark, where he died. He was succeeded by his brother Lewon II (1187–1198, future King Lewon I the Great, 1198–1219).

F. The Fall of Jerusalem and the Famous "Oath of Şalāḥ ed-Dīn to the Armenians and Christians"

The year 1187 saw an event of extreme importance, which was the fall of Jerusalem to Şalāḥ ed-Dīn. According to narratives, the immediate cause was a relatively insignificant assault in 1187 by Reynaud de Chatillion (a feudal lord of Jerusalem) on a caravan in which Şalāḥ ed-Dīn's sister was said to be traveling. The incident immediately became a pretext for a large-scale retaliation by the Ayyūbids. At Ḥaṭṭīn, near Lake Țabaraya/Tiberias in Palestine, King Guy of Lusignan of Jerusalem was defeated, and the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem fell on October 2, 1187/Rajab 27, 583H. This event caused the Third Crusade (1189–1192).

The capture of Jerusalem by Ayyūbid Ṣalāḥ ed-Dīn was a watershed. It also has special significance for Armenian history; it created an occasion for a renewal or a "re-confirmation," as will be discussed next, of the Medinan Oaths to the Armenians and Eastern Christians of the city and everywhere—as it was claimed—under Muslim rule. He was the second liberator of the Holy City from the infidels after Rāshīdūn Caliph 'Umar (Ibn al-Khattāb, 634-644) in 638, and he saw and presented himself as the new champion of Islam.

Ṣalāḥ ed-Dīn stormed the city with an enormous force, occupied all the Latin churches, and converted them into mosques, but refrained from entering the Great Mosque of 'Umar before "purifying" it, because the Crusaders had used it. He was said to have ordered a caravan of five hundred camels to bring in the special rose water of Damascus to wash the mosque that was contaminated by the Crusaders. Christians were strictly forbidden from entering this mosque. Otherwise, only the Eastern Christians were allowed freedom of worship, but the Latins were evacuated and their churches were confiscated. This time around as well, Bishop Abraham of the Armenians (who is said to have taken part in the Ecumenical Council of Hromkla in 1180) led a delegation to meet Ṣalāḥ ed-Dīn and presented the subjection of the Armenians to him. The bishop was said to have shown him the previous three oaths of the Prophet, 'Alī, and 'Umar and requested their reconfirmation of the promise to protect the Armenian churches, persons, estates, and property in Jerusalem. In return, the Armenians would pay the *jizyah* (head tax) and recognize no other sovereign.⁶⁸ Ṣalāḥ ed-Dīn complied with the request and signed an elaborate oath. A copy of the oath is said to be in the archives of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem. It is cited in the *History of Sawanaleanc'* in his translation into Armenian. It is almost identical with the Arabic text in circulation and is generally accepted to be authentic. The following is my translation of the Armenian version at the Patriarchate (as cited in *Sawanaleanc'*)⁶⁹:

This [writ] is granted by Ṣalāḥ ed-Dīn Ibn Muẓaffar: Glory be to God who allowed me to open the gates of the Holy City and cleansed its temples of the idols. We address greetings and blessings to Muḥammad Ibn Abdallāh, who went through hardship in order to bring peace upon humanity, greetings to his associates too. This is what Muḥammad wrote and the same was reconfirmed by the prince of the magnificent temple, the Sultan Ṣalāḥ ed-Dīn (may God extend the days of his rule to eternity and bestow upon him all that is good and blissful in afterlife). As our lord 'Umar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb

(may God be pleased at him and increase his glory) bowed to the will of Muḥammad, we too must obey and follow his path. Among the Christian peoples, they [Muḥammad and 'Umar] decided to designate the Armenians and their co-religionists the Ethiopians, Copts and Syrian Christians, as subjects of the Messenger of God (peace be upon him). 'Umar Ibn Khaṭṭāb and 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib (may God be pleased with them) followed his decision. The present document was written for both the above mentioned [Christian] peoples and all other peoples submitted to us by God. This [document] was written for the near and far, close ones and strangers as an awesome oath and public proclamation and as a testament to my successors, whose justice it will reveal too. This is an obligation that is the privilege of Muslims, who are required to fulfill and not to go beyond it as they will only demean it. If anyone of the faithful dares to oppose it, he will have contradicted the orders of God's Messenger (peace be upon him). This was agreed upon by my entire administration, nobles, and associates and their followers. Indeed, he who contradicts this oath—be him a Muslim, even a monarch or anyone else—will dishonor his obligation toward this divine oath, and will face eternal judgment. By the present writ on parchment I adopted this oath and treaty requested from the Muslims and the faithful and the Prophet and Messenger of God and his successors, and made it compulsory for all the generals under my command. Great are this oath and its conditions, which God required of His Prophet and Messenger, and his king [Ṣalāḥ ed-Dīn], who stand close to His worship. It is my duty to fulfill the obligations stated in this oath, to protect the valleys and palm groves, the population of the large and small provinces, their worship and churches. It is my obligation to protect the Great Church of Mār Ya'qūb in the southwest of the city near Zion, also the Church known after the Olive Garden (Archangel) and Christ's Prison (Monastery of the Savior), the Churches of Bethlehem and Nāblus, the greatly revered location behind the Church of Holy Ascension, and the place from which the Christians believe that the light shone, because it is the tomb of the Messiah (peace be upon Him), also the upper and lower parts of Golgotha, the location of the Cross and the Church of St. John. These are the places of the Armenians in the Holy City and its vicinity and there must be no debate concerning them. These locations must be given to them, as the Messenger of God (peace be upon him) had done so previously, and his noble companions after him. I too granted to them [Armenians] the totality of their churches, worshipping places, the clergy, and pilgrims' quarters, wherever they are, on the hills, or in the valleys, caves, and all other locations. Let their religion and property be kept safe and sound at sea and land, east and west, and wherever I and my seal are. Let there be no discrimination between my people and the orthodox [Christians] and let them be kept safe of all infliction, pain, and evil. He who causes harm to anyone of them

will become an enemy to my person, my assistants and my people. I am absolute ruler, therefore it is worthy of me to protect them of all evils. If a problem external [unrelated] to us arises let them resolve it among themselves and do not interfere or promise anything. Let no bishop be removed from his office, or a Christian of his faith, or a priest [vardapet] of his vocation, or a traveler of his path, and no monastic be thrown out of his cell. Do not persuade the Christian people to convert to Islam. Do not destroy any of the estates of the Churches. He who commits such acts will have contradicted God's will and His Messenger's (may God be pleased at him) as well as my prerogatives and my oath to them [Armenians], the Ethiopians, the Copts, and the Syrians. Trespassers will have committed injustice before God and will be held accountable before His Messenger and his associates. If clerics and bishops encounter hardship, they must be consoled. No excessive pressure must be put upon the merchants and their merchandise. They must pay a yearly tribute of two *dinārs*, and no more taxes beyond their capacity must be required of the tax payers. In case of war with the enemies, nothing should be asked of them [Christians], because the war is not waged for their sake. They will continue paying the same amounts. If the taxpayers are Muslims, they must be protected by the royal delegates. This is the reason why I granted the Christians this oath of God and His Messenger (peace be upon him). The requirements stated by this oath and treaty upon the Muslims, also concern blood-tributes and holy relics. If their churches need renovations, the Muslims should contribute, not out of any consent to their religion but out of their piety and grace for the glory of God and His Messenger (peace be upon him). It was ruled by God's Messenger (peace be upon him) that the faithful perform their duties and fulfill their promises. It is forbidden to employ the Christians as slaves, or to use their property and mules, or to prevent them from any of their endeavors. According to the orders of the Messenger (peace be upon him), all that the elders [religious] legislated for you [Muslims] should not be overlooked. Anyone who does so by avoiding some rules or reducing others, he will have broken his oath before God and His Messenger (peace be upon him). This oath was given to Bishop Abraham and transmitted through him to their [Armenians'] bishops, clerics and the people, and their followers the Ethiopians, Copts and Syrians. This is protection in return to their duties toward God and His Messenger (peace be upon him), his successors and agents. The duties imposed by the Messenger (peace be upon him) are more strict and fair than promises for protection that come from mere faith. Let this compact remain unchanged by me and the caliphs that will succeed me, the people of Muḥammad and all the faithful and the Muslims from now to the end of the world that we will inherit, for He is the benefactor. This oath was witnessed by the faithful brothers who were present [to its writing]. It was written on the 20th of Rajab and

the 582nd year of the Hijrah [Oct 5, 1186] of our Prophet (peace be upon him). Let God decide everything in peace. Witnessed by ‘Izz ed-Dīn, Shihāb ed-Dīn, Najm ed-Dīn and Abū’l-‘Awf.

According to Armenian sources, before the Crusader occupation of the city in 1099, most churches and other locations mentioned in Ṣalāḥ ed-Dīn’s oath were in the hands of Armenians. Ṣalāḥ ed-Dīn, in fact, “sold the Church of Holy Ascension to the Armenians,” says Sawanaleanc’ and required an entrance fee of one dinār from each pilgrim.⁷⁰

G. The Aftermath: Franks and Armenians

Similar to the Turkish conquest of Manazkert in 1071, the fall of Jerusalem to Ṣalāḥ ed-Dīn was a watershed in Near Eastern and medieval history. When he marched over Antioch in 1188/584H, the Christian world was even more alarmed. Constantinople was in confusion after the death of Manuel Komnenos, the Seljuks of Iconium were in decline, and “bandits” of all backgrounds were at large in Asia Minor. At the start of the Third Crusade, Pope Clement III (1187–1191) sent a letter that was addressed simultaneously to Prince Lewon II (1187–1198, future King Lewon I) and Catholicos Grigor Tlay asking their urgent assistance. It seems that in the eyes of the west, the Barony of Cilicia was one of the most important Christian states of the Levant, and the Catholicosate was the most important religious institution.⁷¹ Led by three European monarchs, the objective of the Third Crusade was the recovery of Jerusalem,⁷² but it missed the target and dispersed.

In the stories of the Third Crusade, a seemingly minor detail that deserves attention is the correspondence between Catholicos Grigor IV Tlay and Ṣalāḥ ed-Dīn. The texts are preserved in the histories of Ibn Shaddād, Ibn al-Furāt, and Abū Shāmmah.⁷³ The catholicos was very ambivalent, but eager to exclude Cilicia of possible conflict, he also wanted to show that Cilicia was a friendly nation and otherwise powerless before the Crusader onslaught. On the other hand, he warned Ṣalāḥ ed-Dīn of the size and potentials of these armies. Some authors question the authenticity of these letters; others confirm it and go further by reminding that the catholicos was in good terms with Nūr ed-Dīn, and anyway a pragmatist and more pro-Muslim than pro-Latin.⁷⁴ Grigor IV corresponded with all the parties and figures, be they Arab, Latin, or Byzantine, including the eastern vardapets in Siwnik’ on the mainland. He was genuinely trying to spare Cilicians

and Armenians to the west of the mainland the consequences of regional conflict.

When what remained of the Third Crusade entered Syria, Ṣalāḥ ed-Dīn ordered strategic withdrawals, even from the fortress of Baghras, which Lewon II immediately took. Already during the first year of Lewon's term, Cilicia came under attack by Turkmen led by a certain Rustom, and in the next year, there was an Ayyūbid invasion. V. Tēr Lewondean points to the ambiguities surrounding both these invasions.⁷⁵ After two years of conflict, the Crusaders came to an agreement with Ṣalāḥ ed-Dīn on December 2, 1192/Dhūl-Qa'dah 25, 588 at Ramlah in Palestine. By the terms of this treaty, they kept Akkā and Yāfā, Tripoli and Antioch, but Jerusalem would remain under Ayyūbid control. As the "Liberator of the Holy City," Ṣalāḥ ed-Dīn claimed to be the champion for the Islamic cause and lord over a vast territory from the Taurus to Egypt. This status inevitably marginalized the 'Abbāsīd Caliph in Baghdad.

In 1193, Ṣalāḥ ed-Dīn sent a message to Prince Lewon II asking his submission. When the latter turned him down, he decided to finally annex Cilicia. According to the historian Smbat Sparapet, he arrived on the borders of Cilicia near the Black River, but fell ill and died there; thus, Cilicia was saved.⁷⁶ After his death, the Ayyūbid Empire was divided between his three sons and his brother. Al-Afḍal took south Syria and Palestine with Damascus as its center; al-'Azīz took Egypt; al-Zāhir took north Syria with Aleppo as its center; and his brother al-'Ādil, a very competent man, took the lion's share in Upper Mesopotamia and the Tigris. By 1199, he united the kingdom and restored the Ayyūbid Empire.⁷⁷

H. The Project of the Latin-Armenian Kingdom

While the Ayyūbid brothers were busy with internal conflicts, Lewon II was trying to expand into Antioch and annex it to Cilicia. He recovered some fortresses from the Seljuks of Iconium and the Byzantines. As in the past, he still provided assistance to the Crusaders and in return, expected a crown from the Papacy and the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick Barbarossa (1155–1190). In 1190, the latter arrived at the Cilician Gates on the Taurus, which was then in Armenian hands.⁷⁸ An embassy headed by Bishop Nersēs Lambronac'i was sent to meet the emperor. A promise was obtained from him that the principality would become a kingdom. However, his death by drowning on June 10, 1190 (in the Saleph River in Cilician territory) delayed the project by

eight years.⁷⁹ In 1191, a new Crusader Kingdom rose in Cyprus, which was established by King Richard I Lionheart (1189–1199) of England, who landed in Cyprus instead of Jerusalem. Lewon actively helped the British in this operation. Richard appointed Guy of Lusignan the first king of Cyprus and left. This French family was to become a part of Cilician history in its most unfortunate times.

In 1196, Lewon revived the project of the kingdom, by sending an envoy to Pope Celestine III (1191–1198) to mediate with the Holy Roman Empire. In return for conditions by the Latin Church, to which the Armenians superficially agreed, two crowns were sent: one from the pope and another from Emperor Henry VI (1191–1197). In turn, Emperor Alexios III Angelos (1195–1203) sent Lewon another crown advising him to ally with the Greeks who were “closer” to him, as he said. Cilician Armenians always remained faithful to their Latin alliances. Their administration, some aspects of the feudal system, and intellectual culture were westernized. The port of Ayas/Ajazzo on the Mediterranean became a center for international trade and hosted Venetian and Genoese merchants and communities. Latin and French were used in the court as well as outside.

IV. The Kingdom and the Church between Latins, Byzantines, Ayyūbids, Mongols, and Mamlūks

A. Ecumenism and Politics

Already under Latin and Byzantine pressures, the project of the Cilician Kingdom brought the Armenian Church into the center of political debates. However, even though Cilician realpolitik was not always in favor of the autonomy of the church, the circumstances were an opportunity for the Cilician clergy to develop ecumenical policies with regard to matters of faith and church union. A meeting between Bishop Nersēs, future catholicos Šnorhali, and Alexios Axouch at Maşşışah (a kinsman of Emperor Manuel) signaled the beginning of church union negotiations between the Byzantine and Armenian churches. These lasted till the end of the twelfth century and three figures, in particular, were involved: Bishop Nersēs Lambronac'i (1153–1198)⁸⁰, Catholicoi Nersēs IV Klayec'i-Šnorhali (1000–1173, incumbency 1166–1173), and Grigor Tlay. Almost all Cilician catholicoi were raised and educated in the Greco–Latin tradition and managed to develop a unique ecumenism without deviating from the basic traditions of the Armenian Apostolic Church. At the time,

however, their position was neither understood nor appreciated. In fact, it was misunderstood and antagonized by almost all concerned, both in their own environment and by the Armenians in the east. I will refer to these times and issues in Chapter 5 on Cilician spiritual and intellectual culture.

Around 1150, the Catholicosate was finally established in the Fortress of Hromkla, which was more than a century after its evacuation from Bagratid Ani in 1045. In 1148, four years after the fall of Edessa, Beatrice de Soane, the widow of Joscelin II of Courtenay of Edessa, gave the location to the Armenian Church in Trust, because after the capture of Delük (just north of Aynṭab), she felt that she could not maintain control over that part of the Euphrates. The fortress of Hromkla (*Rumkalē*, *Qal'at al-Rūm* or Fortress of the Christians), which was just northeast of Aynṭab, was built on a rock península in the River Euphrates, on the borders of Cilicia, on Muslim-controlled land. Sometime later, the church purchased it from Joscelin III for 15,000 dahekans. "The official deed of the transfer was kept in the archives of Hromkla, so that . . . no member of the Courtenay family should ever claim the castle."⁸¹

Byzantium never abandoned efforts and pressures to convert the Armenians to the Chalcedonian faith of the empire; otherwise, it always looked down on them as its vassals. At a most peculiar moment in 1170, when the Muslim convert Prince Mleh was chasing the Greeks and the Franks from the Cilician planes, massacring and capturing their magnates, Catholicos Šnorhali at Hromkla was engaged in church union talks with Byzantine delegates. He was a genuine believer in ecumenical principles and wrote to the famous Jacobite Bishop of Antioch, Michael the Syrian:

I am asked [by the Greeks] to recognize two natures in Jesus Christ and to honor the fourth Council [Chalcedon, 451], to celebrate the birth of Christ on the 25th of December and Mass with leavened bread and water, and not to use the words: God, Holy, Who was crucified. On these conditions we are promised [by Emperor Manuel 1143–1180] great benefactions.⁸²

There followed a long chain of letters, meetings, pan-Armenian synods, delegates, and mutual accusations as to who exactly was the cause of the breakdown of talks. In 1179, six years after the death of Šnorhali, another pan-Armenian synod was held at Hromkla. Nersēs Lambronac'i again spoke in favor of a compromise with Byzantium.⁸³

Michael the Syrian was present at this meeting and was as radical as always concerning any negotiations with or concessions to the Byzantines. Against the background of centuries of Byzantine religious persecutions of non-Chalcedonians and Monophysites, no compromise was reached.⁸⁴ I will describe this process in greater detail a little later in this chapter.

B. King Lewon I: Realpolitik, the Cilician Spirit, and the Kingdom

Even though Armenians had too much at stake in their negotiations with the Papacy and the European monarchs, Prince Lewon continued his efforts to come to terms with Constantinople as well. A Het'umid on his mother's side, Lewon was Greek raised and educated. As king (later on), he signed his name in Greek followed by his title in Armenian: "Leon t'agawor hayoc," or Lewon king of Armenians.⁸⁵ Otherwise, he was a pragmatist, and neither a naïve Hellenophile nor a Latinophile. In 1197, he sent Bishop Nersēs Lambronac'i at the head of a delegation to Constantinople to discuss matters of disagreement and find common grounds. On his return, Lambronac'i wrote,

After discussing things [with the Greeks], we found them ignorant, and materialistic, and as stubborn as the Jews, unwilling to serve God by the renewal of the Holy Ghost, only in the oldness of the letter. Our spiritual goodwill was grievously disheartened and we came away troubled and disappointed in our pious hope.⁸⁶

With no theological or doctrinal scruples, Lewon sought reconciliation/union with the Latin Church, in particular, without gaining the hostility of the Greeks, if he could. Surely, the Papacy would have been pleased to see a Latin-Armenian kingdom in the Levant as a buffer between the west and the Muslim world. Earlier on, the conquest of Spain and Sicily by the Muslims had warned Europe against the danger. On his part, Lewon needed the support of the west and was prepared to make concessions. He made promises to the papacy and the European monarchs, but at home, the eastern *vardapets* on the mainland in the northeast and the large factions in Cilicia stood firm in their refusal of all such moves. Liberal and ecumenical clergy, such as Lambronac'i, became targets. Despite Prince Lewon's warnings, the latter introduced Latin as well as ancient Armenian customs into his church at Țarşuş.⁸⁷ He was genuinely fond of the Latin and generally more joyous, artistic models, such as church buildings, customs, art, and the "seemliness of their robes and rites, as opposed the rigged

asceticism of the Caucasian Armenians, who had to conduct most of their services in secret."⁸⁸

It was this Cilician spirit of openness to new ideas and perspectives that was responsible for the Silver Age and the opening up of the culture. It was in Cilicia and precisely through the efforts of these figures of the twelfth century that Armenian religious culture took a sharp turn into a new phase, a renaissance of sorts. In the presence of the Crusaders and indirectly the Byzantines, surrounded by Muslim states from the north and east, a strong Latin-Armenian kingdom was seen as the only "natural environment" by the Cilicians. The Muslim side seemed to be alien to them, and the royal crown sent from the west became a high priority for Lewon. When he reminded the Germans of Emperor Frederick's commitment, they were reluctant to take decisive steps, but Lewon continued his full support of the Crusaders everywhere. His troops took part in the siege of 'Akkā, and assisted Richard Lionheart in the conquest of Cyprus, as mentioned.⁸⁹ However, at the same time, he was working on annexing Antioch to his kingdom and controlling the mountain passages to the west and the north. After some violent interludes, a marriage was arranged between his niece Alice and Raymond, Bohemund's son, to ensure at least hereditary rights.⁹⁰

In 1197, the German imperial delegate left for the east with two crowns, one for Lewon and another for Aimery of Cyprus (crowned in September). The emperor only demanded to be recognized as Lewon's sovereign. The pope had his own politics and interests. Since the First Crusade, the Papacy had attempted to impose unity over the Armenian Church. The Franciscan missions were active in Cilicia and to the east and north of it. Conversions into Catholicism and/or concessions created a rift between the Cilicians and the eastern vardapets, who considered themselves the defenders of the purity of national traditions, as they claimed. In Cilicia itself, there were divisions and mutual accusations, because the royal crown with the approval and the blessing of the pope implied an expectation from the Armenians to acknowledge the papal supremacy as the head of the Christian Church.

Before the coronation, a delegation headed by Archbishop Conrad of Mainz arrived in Sis. The pope asked Lewon to consent to three conditions related to the liturgy: to celebrate Christmas and Saints' days with the Latin Church, to say the matins and vespers in the church (a custom discontinued since Arab occupation), and to break Christmas Eve and Easter fasts only by fish and oil. The cardinal was reported saying,

When you have adopted these rites, you need no longer worry about gifts and dues you have to offer the Emperor and the Pope in homage for your crown. If you refuse, I am commanded to require from you large sums in gold, silver, and jewels.⁹¹

Lewon summoned the bishops, who first rejected the papal condition, but he managed to persuade them to accept these terms in words and not in deeds. It seems that some modifications were agreed on, whereas matters of dogma, which would separate the churches and become stumbling blocks, were excluded. The Latins demanded that the "promise be ratified under oath by twelve bishops, and Lewon persuaded a dozen prelates to swear accordingly."⁹² This was a compromise and in their reply, both Lewon and Catholicos Grigor VI Apirat (1193/1194–1203) expressed their respect and submission to the Papacy.

Minor changes were introduced into the Armenian liturgy, but no doctrinal modifications were made. In a letter written to the pope in 1201, Catholicos Grigor VI explained that the Armenian faith remained what it had always been without any additions or deletions.

The union with the Church of Rome was not a conversion, but a union within the universal church to which they all belonged, as the regeneration of Baptism caused all men to become the sheep of the same fold, namely, the church of the living God.⁹³

The arrangement was a compromise that stirred popular discontent both in Cilicia and on the mainland, under the Zak'arids at the time. The great monasteries and seminaries there found the situation totally unacceptable, and in addition to other problems between the eastern and western Armenians, the dispute eventually led to the election of another catholicos at Ējmiacin in 1441, while the Holy See in Sis was not vacant.

On January 6, 1198, at the cathedral of St. Sophia of Țarşûş, in the presence of the Imperial Chancellor Conrad of Hildesheim, the papal delegate Conrad of Mainz, and Frankish magnates, Lewon received a crown from the representative of the Holy Roman Emperor Henry V and was anointed by the Armenian Catholicos Grigor VI Apirat. He received the royal insignia from the papal delegate.⁹⁴ Cilicia was officially recognized as an independent state by the West, and as a de facto by the East. According to Kirakos Ganjakec'i, another crown was sent by the Byzantine emperor Alexios III Angelos (1195–1203), but it is not clear whether it arrived before the European crown or later on,

and whether it was sent because of the German step. The Byzantine emperor sent the following advice along with the crown: "Put not upon thy head the crown the Romans have sent thee, for thou art much nearer to us than thou art to Rome."⁹⁵ The rivalry over controlling Cilician politics could not have been more symbolically manifested than in this episode of double crowns. Some sources mention an embassy sent by Lewon to Constantinople around 1197 to thank the emperor. However, it seems that after the coronation, efforts toward the union of Greek and Armenian churches were abandoned.⁹⁶

C. The Latin-Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia between Franks and Muslims

Cilicia was now officially a Latin-Armenian Kingdom in the midst of the Islamic world with all the appearances and consequences of a choice of this gravity. One of the peculiarities of the Cilician period was the occasional divergence between the policies of the church and the monarchy/nobility. Perhaps for the first time, since the conflict between the Aršakuni kings Aršak and Pap and the catholicoi, the church and monarchy stood apart, and a compromise was not always achieved.

Until 1201, no major events troubled the Near East, where in addition to Cilicia, there were still two Crusader kingdoms, Jerusalem and Antioch/Tripoli. Cyprus was the third kingdom in the Mediterranean. Lewon's project of annexing Antioch lasted more than fifteen years. A strong Cilicia was seen as a threat, and alliances were made between the Crusaders and the Seljuks of Iconium and the Ayyūbid Sultanate of Aleppo against this sovereign Armenian kingdom. Rivalries between the Crusaders and Lewon I intensified. He put a siege on Antioch, took the city, and then left it. Despite the mediation of Pope Innocent III (1161–1216), the conflicts continued. The Templars assisted Bohemund IV (also known as the "One Eyed," King of Antioch 1201–1205, 1208–1216, 1219–1233, also Count of Tripoli 1187–1233), who was a rival to Lewon's nephew Prince Ruben-Raymond of Antioch. Lewon led campaigns on many fronts into Aleppo (between 1203–1206), Antioch, and other places in the north and seemed to succeed in many places. Eventually, to ensure the neutrality of his most dangerous foe Ayyūbid Sultan al-Malik al-ʿĀdil, he came to terms with him and once more focused on Antioch. In 1208–1209/605, Seljuk Sultan Kay Khusrow I of Iconium made an attempt to invade Cilicia from the north.⁹⁷ Al-Malik al-ʿĀdil mediated by Lewon's request, and peace was negotiated based

on noninterference. Lewon respected only the Seljuk part. In 1216, he took Antioch and since he had no male heir, he designated his nephew Ruben-Raymond as his heir. Until the end of his term, he drove away several attacks by the Seljuks and Ayyūbids of Aleppo.

After the coronation of Lewon and the public Latinization of Cilicia, a conflict between the king and Catholicos Grigor was inevitable. Het'umid Yovhannēs VI Ssec'i (1203–1221) was appointed catholicos, but when in 1205 the latter denounced the queen for adultery, Lewon imprisoned his queen at the fortress of Vahka. In 1207, he turned against catholicos Yovhannēs and members of his family. The catholicos was deposed and deprived of all funds. He sought the assistance of al-Zāhir of Aleppo and the Seljuks of Iconium against Lewon I. In 1208–1209, Sultan Kay-Khusrow I took the fortress of Berdunk' and in 1216/613H, the fortress of Gaban fell to 'Izz ed-Dīn Kay-Kawūs. The latter was recovered by Lewon I at a great cost. The anti-Latins allied with the Ismā'īli Assassins and made them kill the royal regent Adam. Eventually, Het'um of Lambron reconciled the catholicos and the king. When widowed, and in line with the tradition of political marriages with the Crusader princesses, Lewon married Sybilla of Lusignan, the daughter of Aimery of Lusignan, King of Cyprus. A daughter, Zabēl born of this marriage, was to become his heir. Lewon I the Great died in May 1219, after having reigned for thirty-two years.⁹⁸

With Lewon's threat removed, Bohemund IV of Antioch drove out the heir Ruben-Raymond, and the latter resorted to Sis. However, just before his death, Lewon I had designated his daughter Zabēl as heir to the throne and deprived Ruben-Raymond of his right. After a series of events, Het'umid Kostandin, the regent of Zabēl, appeared on the stage with force. In 1222, in an attempt to resolve the dispute, the Cilicians decided to get Zabēl married to sixteen-year-old Philip, the son of Bohemund IV, on the condition that as king he would convert to the Armenian Apostolic faith.⁹⁹ This youthful and arrogant prince always remained faithful to his Latin roots and replaced the court staff by Franks. He even sent the crown of Lewon I to Antioch. In reaction, he was thrown into prison; when Bohemund IV asked permission from the pope to invade Cilicia, he was turned down, and even the Templars and the Hospitaliers refused to assist him this time around.¹⁰⁰

At the end of 1225, Cilicia was between two enemies, Bohemund IV in the south and Seljuk Sultan 'Alā' ed-Dīn Kay Kubād I (1219/616H–

1236/634H) in the north. The Cilicians asked the assistance of Atabek Shihāb ed-Dīn of Aleppo. The latter assisted the Cilicians, and an attack by the Antiochans was driven back around 1226.

In the same year, the regent Kostandin suggested the marriage of Zabēl to his son Het'um.¹⁰¹ In June 1226, after two failed marriages, and much against her will, Lewon's designated heir fourteen-year-old Zabēl (born in 1212) was forced to marry eleven-year-old Het'um (born in 1215), the son of her regent Kostandin (d. 1263). Even though Zabēl was the sovereign to the end, and Het'um her husband, the two rival houses of Cilicia were reconciled and Het'um proved to be a competent ruler. Throughout the Rubenid-Het'umid term of more than forty years, the catholicos was Kostandin I Barjrbērdc'i (1221–1267). Lewon's kingdom extended from Isauria to the Amanus,¹⁰² and the Catholicosate reigned from Hromkla over the entire nation. Cilicia had become an alternative Armenia. According to the travel notes of German minister Wilbrandt Oldenburg, who arrived in Cilicia in 1211, in addition to Armenians, the country was also inhabited by Latins, Turks, Greeks, and other people. He also mentions that Cilicia was not "real Armenia," which was in the north under Turkish domination. He also gave descriptions of various fortresses and cities.¹⁰³ Lewon never issued coins, but his successor/s Zabēl and Het'um had bilingual coins probably due to the expanding Cilician trade.¹⁰⁴ Despite everything, by sheer power and resilience, Lewon managed to maintain a balance between his eastern and western policies, and defended the territorial integrity of the country. However, Cilicia was always looked on as an enemy by its neighbors. The Muslims regarded the Franks a temporary nuisance, but a Latin–Armenian strong state in their midst could not be tolerated for long.

D. Cilicians, Mongols, and Mamlūks—Het'um I and Mongol Khans

The turning point in the history of the entire Near East was the conquest of the Mongols over Seljuk Sultan of Iconium Ghiyāth ed-Dīn Kay Khusraw II (1237–1246) during the battle of Kosē Dagħ in 1243/641H.¹⁰⁵ The event signaled the beginning of the Mongol period, and soon, Cilician history too became a part of Mongol history, in addition to Crusader and Islamic histories. The Mongol "eruption changed the geographical complexion of the Middle East," says Stewart. The fate of the Cilicians as well as the Georgians and almost all the Armenians was now connected to the Mongols, who, at this time, were also the

enemies of the Muslims and the Mamlûks; the latter resented the Cilicians anyway. Armenian association with the Mongols also signaled the beginning of an open conflict with the Mamlûks.¹⁰⁶

Het'um delegated his brother Smbat Sparapet to Karakorum to meet their leader Kuyuk. In 1247, the latter left Sis but in 1248, Kuyuk died and Mongke succeeded him. This Armenian prince married a Mongol princess at Karakorum and returned with no significant achievements. Het'um I himself took up a journey to Karakorum by an "invitation" of Mongke. Kirakos Ganjakec'i describes Het'um's famous journey. In 1254, the king left Sis and crossed Seljuk lands in disguise. He then moved from Kars to the western shores of the Caspian Sea into Asia. He reached Karakorum in September and left in November of the same year, this time through the southern shores of the Caspian Sea and Siwnik' (then under Mongol Baijū, a Christian nephew of Kuyuk) and arrived in Cilicia in 1255. Het'um was the first Christian ruler who visited the Mongols, and, more importantly, for the first time also, he spoke on behalf of the Cilician Armenians and the Christians of his region as well. The Great Khan was said to have exempted the Armenian churches and monasteries of all taxes on Mongol territories. In this context, Mutaftian states that despite common belief, there is no proof that Mongke was baptized as a Christian. From the beginning, the Mongols had a clear plan to expand into Muslim-controlled lands and were more sympathetic toward the Christians as their allies, not because of their alleged Christianity.¹⁰⁷ In 1258, after the destruction of 'Abbāsīd Baghdad, the symbolic center of the Islamic *Ummah* [community], Hulagu (1217–1265) led the Mongols into Syria to capture Aleppo and Damascus.¹⁰⁸ He then withdrew to Azerbaijan, where he established the Ilkhanid dynasty expanding over Iran as well; this dynasty lasted until 1335.

At this time, all three Armenian kingdoms or dynastic territories of the thirteenth century, Cilicia, Siwnik', and Erzinka, were under Mongol sovereignty. As such, they were the auxiliaries of the Mongols against the Muslims. This is an aspect of Armenian history at the time that, in turn, seems to be understudied. While already allies of the Franks, Cilicians, and Georgians, many Armenians were now a part of the Mongol armies invading Muslim territories. Arab sources speak of "Armenian atrocities" in the taking of Aleppo and Damascus, for example.¹⁰⁹ In 1260, there were Armenians in the Mongol armies at 'Ayn Jālūt, when the Mamlûks under Qutuz defeated them.

Just as the declared objective of the Mongols was the defense of Christianity and the recovery of the holy places (but in fact the occupation of the entire region), so also was the objective of the Mamlūk Sultanate the defense of Islam and the recovery of *Dār al-Salām* (Land of Peace or Muslims) from the infidels, both Christian and Mongol.¹¹⁰ Relying on Mongol support, when Het'um I expanded his territories into Cappadocia, Mar'āsh, and Behesni, the Mamlūks saw it their duty to recover these "Muslim lands." In sum, the Mamlūks looked at Cilicia as a target¹¹¹ and were well aware that their Catholicosate at Hromkla was outside Cilicia and in Muslim land.

E. The Conquests of Baybars (1261–1271)

In 1261, Baybars, one of the most prominent figures of the Mamlūks, appeared on the stage of Egypt and Syria and for the next seven years, he waged large-scale offensives on 'Akkā, Antioch, and other Frankish territories further north. Cilicia was now caught between two Muslim powers, the Seljuks and the Mamlūks. The latter imposed very heavy tributes on Cilicians and demanded the evacuation of the fortresses of the Amanus. Het'um agreed in return for his son, who had fallen captive during a Mamlūk raid earlier on; he also returned the favorite companion of Baybars, Shams ed-Dīn Sunkur al-Ashqar, captured at Aleppo. In 1263, there were new clashes between the Mamlūks and the Mongol-Armenian coalition around Aleppo, Ma'arrat al-Nu'mān, and Sarmin. In 1264, Het'um had to send troops to Bira on the Euphrates just south of Hromkla, because the Mamlūks were approaching Cilicia and the Mongols were withdrawing.¹¹²

Baybars played a very important role in the destruction of the Latin states and also in the weakening of Christian influence in al-Shām. Cilicia was an enemy both as a Christian country and as a vassal ally of the Mongols. The main conquests of Baybars were between 1265 and 1271.¹¹³ Under the banner of Islam, he wanted control over the Mediterranean trade, which at the time was in the hands of the Latin states and Cilicia. 'Akkā in Palestine and Ayas in Cilicia were the major ports. However, during the period of Lewon I, Ayas provided greater facilities and was very popular among western merchants. The other coastal cities and fortresses such as al-Marqab, Jebeil/Byblos, Ḥisn al-Akrād/Crac des Chevaliers, and Ṣāfiṭā/Castel Blanc were under the kingdoms of Antioch-Tripoli, Jerusalem-Beirut, and the Knights Hospitallers and Templars. Each one of these, however, had independent policies and connections with the Muslims.¹¹⁴ Italian merchants

and military orders, in turn, had imposed their own terms. The Knights were generally and traditionally more hostile and soon allied with the incoming Mongols against the Mamlūks. Even though their troops had diminished,¹¹⁵ the Crusader kingdoms resisted Ayyūbid invasions almost till the end of the thirteenth century.¹¹⁶ In the context of the events during the 1260s, Ibn al-Furāt has an interesting depiction of the pope as the highest authority over the Franks. He wrote,

You must know that amongst the Franks the Pope is the *khalīfah* [caliph, successor] of the Messiah, in whose place he stands. He has the power to make things unlawful or lawful, to cut and to separate. It is he who crowns and establishes kings, and according to Frankish law, it is through him alone that they can be properly appointed.¹¹⁷

Ibn al-Furāt describes the brief return of Jerusalem to Frederick II of France in 1229–1238, the Khwarizmian attacks, the invasion of Akkā in 1267/665H, and the arrival of “messengers of Sis” to settle matters with Baybars.¹¹⁸ On the occasion of the burning and destruction of ‘Akkā in 1267/665, he justified the attack:

The ‘*ulamā*’s [religious scholars, heads] consider it permissible to burn the crops of the enemy and to fell their trees if the leader of the Muslims approves this, as a method of weakening them.¹¹⁹

In 1268/666H, Antioch fell to Baybars, and many of the inhabitants were sold as slaves.¹²⁰ In 1270/668H, Crac des Chevaliers just inland from Țartūš on the Syrian coast fell, and in 1275/673H, he headed toward Cilician territory. In Cilicia, king Het‘um I was still trying to expand Lewon I’s Latin–Armenian state and was working toward a new crusader alliance, of which the Mongols were to be an important part. He regularly took part in all Mongol expeditions. In 1263/661H, peace was arranged with the Seljuks, and he moved to the east beyond the Euphrates. In 1269/667H, Het‘um abdicated in favor of his son Lewon, and similar to two of his predecessors, he also withdrew to a monastery. The Rubenid/Het‘umid forty-year term was distinguished by advancement in the arts and literature.

The twenty-year term of Lewon II (1269–1289) was a “series of misfortunes,” as De Morgan describes it,¹²¹ because the Mongols were going through a transitional period. He rebuilt whatever was destroyed and gave increased privileges to the Venetian merchants. Marco Polo, who visited Cilicia in 1271, spoke of Ayas as a city of great prosperity

and trade.¹²² Internally, the Armenian nobles whom Lewon I had brought under his control preferred Mamlūk rule and instigated the Egyptians to invade Cilicia.

In 1275/673H, Baybars personally led a second expedition to Cilicia despite a previously made peace treaty. Sis was ransacked¹²³, and the Cathedral was set on fire.¹²⁴ In 1277/675H, he reached Iconium and Cappadocia to "liberate," as he claimed, the Muslim Seljuks from the Mongols,¹²⁵ but died in Mar'ash in 1277. He was succeeded by his son for two years, after which Qalawūn took over (1279/678H–1290/689H). In 1280/679H, there were renewed Mongol invasions into north Syria as far as Ayntāb, Baghras, and Tall Bāshir. In 1281/679H, the Mongols and the Armenians faced a heavy defeat in central Syria and withdrew beyond the Euphrates; a few managed to return home to Cilicia.¹²⁶

In 1283/681H, Ayas was again ransacked and torched by the Mamlūks; Lewon II's visit to Ilkhanid Arghūn in Tabriz, Iran, was a desperate attempt. On June 6, 1285/Rabī' II 1, 684H, by a "ten year ten months ten days ten hours truce," which was soon broken by the other side, Cilicia accepted the sovereignty of the Mamlūks.¹²⁷

In 1291, after the fall of 'Akkā to Mamlūk Qalawūn, Ayas was the only remaining Christian port in the only Christian state of the Levant, with the exception of Cyprus. When Lewon's son Het'um II (1289–1296, 1299–1301) rose to the throne, despite consecutive disasters, Cilicia was still prosperous. This monarch was a Franciscan who called himself Friar John; otherwise, he followed his father's politics. When Qalawūn demanded the entire region of the Euphrates, contrary to the terms of the 1285 Truce, Het'um II appealed to Pope Nicolas IV (1277–1280) and King Philip IV of France but received no response. "The spirit of the Crusades was dead," and the Europeans were already signing trade agreements with the Mamlūks.¹²⁸

In the spring of 1292, having completed the conquest of the remaining Frankish states, Sultan al-Ashraf, Qalawūn's son, marched on the Catholicosial Fortress of Hromkla, the "most exposed Armenian post to the north of the Sultan's territories."¹²⁹ After a month, in May/June, the entire complex of the monastery, the church, and the catholicosial premises were ransacked; many died in terrible massacres or fell captive; and the fate of Catholicos Step'anos IV Hromklayec'i (1290–1293) was obscure. He simply perished in the chaos. The holy relics, manuscripts, and other treasures were seized; also captured at Hromkla was

the Silver "Right Hand" of St. Gregory the Illuminator (or the relics in a golden case). According to the history of Constable Smbat, the latter and some relics were recovered by Het'um II. For seven days, the fall of Hromkla was celebrated in Damascus as a great victory.¹³⁰ In fact, the episode marked the fall of the last Christian religious symbol on Muslim land. The fortress was renamed *Qal'at al-Muslimin* (the Fortress of the Muslims), whereas earlier, it was called Qal'at al-Rûm or Fortress of the Christians/Byzantines.¹³¹ Whatever was salvaged was taken to Sis, where the Holy See was established, and Latinophile Grigor VII Anawarzec'i was elected catholicos (1293–1307), the first in Sis.

The term of Het'um II was punctuated by several withdrawals to monastic life. True to the Het'umid pro-Byzantine legacy, he also wanted to maintain his Latin and Mongol alliances. He even visited Constantinople, and paid a visit to Ilkhanid Baijû. However, just before his arrival, the latter was overthrown, and Het'um paid his respects to Ghazan Khan. According to Bar Hebraeus, he could persuade the latter to halt an order to destroy all the churches on Mongol territories, including the Armenian Churches.¹³² Armenians were still taking part in Mongol expeditions and after a defeat in Syria, Het'um II again visited the Ghazan Khan at Ninewah. He was given a Mongol cavalry of thousand men, paid their expenses, and was even promised assistance to "recover the Holy Land."¹³³

In 1294–1295/694H, according to al-Maqrîzî, Ghazan Khan, a pragmatic and powerful figure, converted to Islam, still maintaining the Mongol Imperial Dream.¹³⁴ In 1299/698H, Ghazan Khan led another invasion into Syria again by Armenian and Georgian participation. Damascus fell, and the conquerors entered the city. The declared objective was still the recovery of the Holy Land from the Mamlûks, a dream of Het'um II.¹³⁵ In 1301/700H, however, the Mongols decided to withdraw, leaving their Christian allies under the mercy of the Mamlûks. In 1304/703H, just before his death, Ghazan decreed that Islam was the official faith of the empire. His successor, Kharbanda was a Muslim fanatic and ordered all Christians to wear a black-lined stripe over the shoulder as a "mark of opprobrium."¹³⁶

The treacherous assassination of Het'um II and young King Lewon III (on November 17, 1307 by Mongol Bilarghu at Anazarva) highlighted the social and political predicament of Cilicians at the time. The direct cause of the double murder was that Bilarghu, a fanatic, wanted to build a mosque (*jâmi'*) and a religious school (*madrasah*) in

Adana but faced the refusal of the court there. When the Armenians complained to Kharbanda, he expressed his anger at Bilarghū, who took revenge, but was later on killed by his master.¹³⁷ It is believed that the crime was planned and instigated by anti-Western members of the Cilician nobility. They resented the rapprochement between the monarchy and the Papacy. Indeed, during the same year, in 1307, Het’um had summoned the notorious council at Sis for the union of Latin and Armenian Churches. About these years, Samvêl Anec’i wrote,

During the reign of Pope Constantine of Caesarea (Kostandin Kesarac’i 1307–1322) the Grand Baron Het’um held a Council [at Sis] wherein union with the Church of Rome was affected and the teachings of our Illuminator [St. Gregory] at nought. It was agreed that Christmas be celebrated on December 25th, and the saints’ days on their respective dates, also that water should be used in the chalice in the celebration of Mass.¹³⁸

The initiative committed the Catholicosate to a path that ran counter to the will of the majority, as well as the eastern vardapets. As expected, the decisions and promises made at this council dissipated before the participants returned home. Marino Sanuto (Sanudo the Elder of Torcello, d. 1338, was a Venetian statesman and geographer) described the sorry state of the Armenian monarchy at the time:

The king of Armenia is under the fangs of four ferocious beasts—the lion, or the Tartars [Mongols] to whom he pays a heavy tribute; the leopard, or the [Mamlūk] Sultan, who daily ravages his frontiers; the wolf, or the Turks, who destroy his power; and the serpent, or the pirates of the seas, who worry the very bones of Armenians.¹³⁹

[He missed the Latin beast and the internal beast, or the dissent of the populace.]

F. Church Union Councils and Popular Dissent—the Fall of the Kingdom

Circumstances and alliances changed, but the Latinophilia of Cilician rulers remained a constant variable in Cilician politics. The political choices of the monarchs directly affected both the people and the church, and shook the balance of power between the political and religious institutions. Armenians venerated their kings and catholicoi, but resented their Latinophilia. Those who openly opposed these policies and measures, such as Catholicos Kostandin Katukec’i (1286–1289), were deposed. On the other hand, some catholicoi, such

as Grigor VII Anawarzec'i (1293–1307) the "Hořom" or Catholic, was appointed by Het'um II precisely for his Latinophilia.¹⁴⁰ The latter fully supported the court policy; he even Latinized the hymns, which later on Grigor Tat'ewac'i (d. 1411) annulled.¹⁴¹ The royal project for union with the Catholic Church caused divisions in Armenian society. Latinophile Unitarians (Unit'orists) were active everywhere. The west made it clear that military and political assistance would be provided only on Armenian consent to the conditions set by Pope Clement V (1305–1314) and acceptance of its hierarchical and doctrinal supremacy. While Muslim discontent against the Cilician–Latin alliance rose, renewed attempts to resume efforts toward unification, in turn, failed to accomplish anything.

During the incumbency of Catholicos Kostandin III Kesarac'i (1307–1322), there were popular uprisings from 1308 to 1309. In 1311, the Patriarchate of Jerusalem broke off in protest against the Latin sympathies of the Cilicians and measures of the Catholicosate in Sis (to which it was only nominally subject anyway).¹⁴²

Circumstances continued to deteriorate during the term of King Ořin (1308–1320), a brother of Het'um II, who, in turn, was a Latinophile. He also shared his brother's political–religious vision and inevitably was disliked by the other side. He spent his early years in office subduing and crushing popular uprisings. About this period, Samv'el Anec'i wrote,

This year in 1309–1310 there assembled at Sis, the capital of the kingdom, a large number of monks and clergy, priests and deacons, vardapets, and bishops, together with many of the people, both men and women, all opposed to the use of water in the chalice at Mass and other changes. King Ořin with the consent of the Patriarch [or Kostandin II Kesarac'i] and the chief nobles seized all these people, imprisoned the doctors in the fortress and put to death very many men and women together with some of the clergy and deacons. He then packed the monks onto a vessel, and exiled them to Cyprus, where most of them died.¹⁴³

In Jacques de Morgan's opinion, external perils "forced Ořin to take drastic steps against the fanatics, who were willing to sacrifice the nation's welfare to their personal feelings and to trivialities relating to church ritual."¹⁴⁴ In 1316, urged by Pope John XXII (1316–1334), King Ořin and Catholicos Kostandin III summoned a third council in Adana, but the decision to join the Catholic Church had the same

fate as its precedents. It is said that in addition to popular protests, Armenian women were active in public demonstrations against the merger.¹⁴⁵ The Unit'orists demanded a complete union with the Latin Church, and more commitments from Ōšin. However, the latter's ambivalence was insufficient for the Apostolic Armenians. It was during the reign of King Lewon IV (1320–1342) that both the kingdom and the Catholicosate encountered the most serious problems at doctrinal and political levels. Catholicos Kostandin IV Lambronac'i (1322–1326) was a Latinophile as well, but was more cautious in his career.

Catholicos Yakobos II Anawarzec'i (1327–1341, 1355–1359) was in favor of improving relations with the Muslim world. He publicly criticized King Lewon IV, accused him of blatant Latinophilia, and eventually anathematized the king. As a result, the Catholicos was dismissed, and Latinophile Mexit'ar I K'rnec'i (1341–1355) was appointed. The latter's incumbency extended over the terms of Lewon IV, Kostandin III (1343–1344), and his successor Kostandin IV (1345–1363). This catholicos even re-ordained the clergy in Catholic rites¹⁴⁶ and personally led the Unit'orist campaigns. The period saw some of the most violent confrontations.

Ōšin, the king's regent, was an ambitious man and virtually became Lewon's warden. His cruelties made him a despised man. He killed or exiled anyone who did not obey him. He even strangled Isabel, the king's sister, and either killed or exiled her five children. Frustrated and confused, King Lewon IV, in turn a violent young man, swore that he would have no further relations with the Latins. In 1329, he murdered his regent Ōšin and sent his head to Sultan Malik al-Našir and the head of Constable Kostandin to Moghul Khān Abu Sa'id. In 1333, after disposing of his own wife on grounds of infidelity, he married Constance Eleonora of Aragon, the daughter of Frederick II of Sicily and the widow of Henry II of Cyprus.¹⁴⁷ In August 1342, Lewon IV was assassinated.¹⁴⁸

Since Lewon had no male children, he had nominated his sister Isabel's third son, Guy of Lusignan as his heir. The latter had escaped death, because at the time of his brothers' assassination he was away.¹⁴⁹ The Cilician crown passed to a French family of nobles, and the Kingdom of Cilicia was then under Latin government. "In those days," says de Morgan, "when the state was synonymous with the ruler, this was a far-reaching change, for Latin influence would necessarily predominate and national tradition would suffer."¹⁵⁰ Despite early sympathies and

attempts, Cilician Armenians were never Latinized and after 1341, the people and the monarchy were divided and resentful of each other.

Kostandin III, or Guy of Lusignan (1342–1344), refused to pay tribute to the Mamlûks and drove them away. He also believed that adopting Latin worship was the best policy for the Armenians. With his three hundred Fränkish guardsmen, he became the victim of a sudden uprising, “all in one day” at Adana, as Jean Dardel puts it.¹⁵¹ In 1345, his successor, Kostandin IV (1344–1363) summoned a council at Sis in less than a year after ascending the throne, at the request of the legate of Pope Clement VI (1342–1352). The assembly had to discuss the 117 “errors imputed to the Armenians and set forth in a memorandum presented to Benedict XII.” The Armenians again agreed to accept these stipulations¹⁵², but again no change occurred on the ground.

By that time, Europe had lost all interest in supporting a Christian state in the Levant, and Cilicia was completely abandoned. Ayas came under a Mamlûk attack, it was briefly recovered and then lost again, the port was blockaded, and the Turkmens marched toward Țarşûş. Discussions between Avignon and Sis dragged for a while, and Muslim assaults from all sides accelerated.

In 1359/760H, Sultan Malik al-Nâşir Ḥasan of Aleppo invaded Cilicia, took Sis, Adana, Țarşûş, and devastated the lowlands.¹⁵³ In April 1364, Kostandin died a natural death. The next year, Kostandin IV (1362–1370), the son of Het’um II, was raised to the throne even though Pope Urban V (1362–1370) had nominated Leo, a close relative of King Peter I of Cyprus. Kostandin IV (1365–1373) was a tyrannical and careless person. He had no interest in the kingdom and left the government to Queen Mary (Myriam), who sent embassies to the monarchs of Europe and the pope asking for assistance. However, on his part, the king wanted to sign a treaty with the Mamlûks and was ready to hand over the kingdom to them. Predictably, he was assassinated. Lewon V, a son of John of Lusignan and Armenian Soldane (1374–1375), who was earlier suggested by the pope in 1365, was invited to take over. He was welcomed by the populace headed by Catholicos Kostandin V Ssec’i (1372–1374) and crowned by an Armenian–Latin double ceremony, at Sis on September 14, 1374.

At this junction in their history, the Cilicians did not seem to tolerate their new monarch. They were said to have collaborated with the Mamlûks in the siege of the fortress of Sis, where the new king resided.¹⁵⁴ Catholicos Połos V Ssec’i (1374–1382) “was one of the chief

instigators of this frightful betrayal" says de Morgan, "showing that he preferred the temporal domination of one of Islam's rulers, rather than the spiritual supremacy of the Pope." The Mamlûks offered to withdraw if the king chose to convert.¹⁵⁵ On April 13, 1375, Lewon V was taken from the fortress to Cairo as the prisoner of Mamlûk Sultan Ashraf, less than ten months after leaving Cyprus. It was in July 1377 that he met the monk Jean Dardel, who accompanied him as counselor, ambassador, and historian-biographer. In October 1382, the last king of Cilicia sailed from Alexandria to Europe, where he lived in exile on a royal pension from European monarchies. He died in Paris on November 29, 1393, in the Palais des Tournelles, Rue St. Antoine, opposite the Hotel St. Paul, where the kings of France lived. After the French Revolution, when his remains also were scattered along with other sovereigns, a tombstone carrying his name was placed in the vaults of the royal tombs of St. Dennis.¹⁵⁶ In 1584, Pope Gregory XIII (1572–1585) wrote in his *Bull Ecclesia Romana*:

Among the other merits of the Armenian nation . . . there is one that is outstanding and deserves particularly to be remembered, namely, that when in times past the Christian princes and armies went forth to recover the Holy Land, no nation, no people, came to their aid . . . than the Armenians . . . ¹⁵⁷

Notes

1. Bedrosian, "Armenia during the Seljuk," 248.
2. Ibid., 249.
3. Ibid., 250.
4. Matthew, *Chronicle*, 294–97.
5. Ibid., 318–21.
6. Ibid., 324–25.
7. Bedrosian, "Armenia during the Seljuk," 252.
8. Ibid., 253.
9. Ibid., 254–55.
10. Ibid., 256.
11. Ibid., 256–57.
12. Ibid., 258.
13. Ibid., 259.
14. Ibid., 260.
15. Ibid., 261.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid., 263.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid., 264.
20. Ibid., 266.

21. Ibid., 267.
22. Reuven Amitai-Preiss, "Mongol Imperial Ideology," in *The Mongol Empire*, ed. Reuven Amitai-Preiss and David O. Morgan (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 57–72, 58–59.
23. Ibid., 60.
24. Ibid., 63.
25. Ibid., 64.
26. Ibid., 66.
27. Ibid., 68–69.
28. Ibid., 72.
29. Het'um [Hethum] "La Flor des Estories de la Terre d'Orient," in *Receuil des Historiens des Croisades, documents Armeniens*, vol. II (Paris, 1906), 245.
30. See Puzant Eghian, *Seljuk, Tatar Osmaneian T'urkeru Patmut'iwn - XI-XV Darer* [The Seljuk, Tartar and Ottoman Turks – XI-XV Centuries] (Antelias: Catholicosate Publications, 1989), 28.
31. Angus Donal Stewart, *The Armenian Kingdom and the Mamlūks: War and Diplomacy during the Reign of Het'um II (1289-1307)* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 7.
32. Jacques de Morgan, *The History of the Armenian People* (Boston, MA: Hayrenik Association, 1965), 194.
33. T. S. R. Boase, "The History of the Kingdom," in *The Cilician Kingdom of Armenia*, ed. T. S. R. Boase (London: Scottish Academic Press, 1978), 3.
34. Ibid., 6.
35. Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The Crusades- A Short History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987), 5–6.
36. Ibid., 33–34.
37. Ibid., 71.
38. Ibid., 119.
39. de Morgan, *History of the Armenian People*, 196.
40. Boase, "History of the Kingdom," 9.
41. Vahan Tēr Lewondean, *L'Arménie Cilicienne et les Pays Arabes au Proche-Orient* [Armenian Cilicia and the Arab Countries of the Near East], (Erevan: 2005), 40.
42. William of Tyre, *The History of Deeds Done beyond the Sea*, trans. E. A. Babcock and A. C. Krey, 2 vols., vol. II (New York: Columbia University Press, 1943), 265–66.
43. Ibid., 266–67.
44. V. Tēr Lewondean, *L'Arménie Cilicienne*, 43–44.
45. Ibid., 45–46.
46. de Morgan, *History of the Armenian People*, 208.
47. Ananun Edeseac'i, *Žamanakagrut'iwn* [Anonymous Historian of Edessa, *Chronicle*], trans. L. Tēr Petrosian (Erevan: Haykakan SSR GA Publications, 1982), 122–23.
48. Ibn al-'Adīm, *Zubdat al-Ḥalab*, vol. II, 320.
49. Ibid., 330.
50. Ghevont Alishan, *Šnorhali ew Paragay iwr* [Šnorhali and his Times] (Venice: St. Lazar, 1873), 313.
51. Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, vol. III, 326.

52. V. Tēr Lewondean, *L'Arménie Cilicienne*, 48.
53. Lewon Tēr Petrosean, *Xaç'akirnerē ew Hayerē* [The Crusaders and the Armenians], vol. II (Erevan: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 2007), 137.
54. V. Tēr Lewondean, *L'Arménie Cilicienne*, 49.
55. Tēr Petrosean, *Xaç'akirnerē ew Hayerē*, vol. II, 139.
56. Michael the Syrian, *Žamanakagrut'iwn* [Chronicle] (Jerusalem: St. Yakob, 1870), 121.
57. Ibn al-Adim, *Zubdat al-Halab*, vol. II, 320.
58. Michael the Syrian, *Žamanakagrut'iwn*, 52.
59. Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, vol. III, 353–55; V. Tēr Lewondean, *L'Arménie Cilicienne*, 53.
60. William of Tyre, *History*, vol. II, 387–88.
61. Eghayan, *History of the Seljuk*, 139.
62. Claude Mutaftian, *Kilikian Kaysrut'iwnneri Xiaçmeruknerum* [La Cilicie au Carrefour des Empires, or Cilicia on the Crossroads of Empires], trans. Amalia Šahumean (Erevan: Nayiri Publications, 2001), 401.
63. V. Tēr Lewondean, *L'Arménie Cilicienne*, 63.
64. de Morgan, *History of the Armenian People*, 209.
65. V. Tēr Lewondean, *L'Arménie Cilicienne*, 70–71.
66. Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, vol. III, 398.
67. Der Nersessian, "The Kingdom of Cilician Armenia," in *The Cilician Kingdom of Armenia*, ed. T. S. R. Boase (London: Scottish Academic Press, 1978), 644.
68. Sawanaleanc', *History of Jerusalem*, 408.
69. The letter is in Sawanaleanc', *History of Jerusalem*, 409–13.
70. *Ibid.*, 414.
71. Der Nersessian, "Kingdom of Cilician Armenia," 645.
72. It was led by three European monarchs: Frederik Barbarosa-Redbearded (1152–1190) of Germany; Philip August (1179–1223) of France; and Richard Lionheart (1189–1199) of England. Philip soon returned to France, Barbarosa was drowned, and Richard landed in Cyprus,
73. See Tēr Lewondean, trans., *Arab Sources on Armenian and Neighboring Countries- II Ibn al-Athīr* [Arab Sources on Armenia and Neighboring Countries – Ibn al-Athīr] (Erevan: Haykakan SSH GA Publications, 1981), 294–97.
74. V. Tēr Lewondean, *L'Arménie Cilicienne*, 78–79.
75. *Ibid.*, 74.
76. Smbat Sparapet, *Žamanakagrut'iwn* [Chronicle] (Venice: St. Lazar, 1956), 204.
77. V. Tēr Lewondean, *L'Arménie Cilicienne*, 91.
78. Der Nersessian, "Kingdom of Cilician Armenia," 645.
79. Boase, "History of the Kingdom," 18.
80. Nersēs Lambronac'i, a brother of Het'um III of Lambron. Born in 1153, he was raised in the court of Manuel Komnenos, studied at the monastery of Skewra, and was ordained by his great-uncle Catholicos Nersēs Šnorhali, and Bishop of Țaršūš by Catholicos Grigor Țlay in 1176.
81. Der Nersessian, "Kingdom of Cilician Armenia," 641–42.
82. Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, vol. I, 367.

83. The main issues on the agenda were still:

- The Christology of the Council of Chalcedon, the two natures of Christ.
- The celebration of Christmas on the 25th instead of the Armenian custom of combining it with the Epiphany on January 6.
- The computation for fixing the date of Easter.
- The use of fermented bread in the Holy Mass.
- Disuse of the Armenian formula 'Holy God, who has been crucified' at the close of the liturgical hymn of the Trisagion (thrice holy).

84. Boase, "History of the Kingdom," 17.

85. de Morgan, *History*, 218.

86. *Ibid.*, 219–20.

87. Boase, "The History of the Kingdom," 17.

88. *Ibid.*, 17–18.

89. Der Nersessian, "Kingdom of Cilician Armenia," 646.

90. *Ibid.*

91. de Morgan, *History of the Armenian People*, 222.

92. *Ibid.*, 223.

93. Der Nersessian, "Kingdom of Cilician Armenia," 647–48.

94. Der Nersessian, *The Armenians* (Great Britain: Thames and Hudson, 1969), 47.

95. de Morgan, *History of the Armenian People*, 224.

96. Der Nersessian, "Kingdom of Cilician Armenia," 649.

97. V. Tēr Lewondean, *L'Arménie Cilicienne*, 97.

98. Boase, "History of the Kingdom," 21.

99. V. Tēr Lewondean, *L'Arménie Cilicienne*, 102.

100. *Ibid.*, 103.

101. *Ibid.*, 105.

102. Der Nersessian, "Kingdom of Cilician Armenia," 649–50.

103. Mutaftian, *Kilikian*, 406.

104. *Ibid.*, 411.

105. Stewart, *Armenian Kingdom*, 43.

106. *Ibid.*

107. Mutaftian, *Kilikian*, 423.

108. *Ibid.*, 424.

109. Stewart, *Armenian Kingdom*, 44.

110. *Ibid.*, 45.

111. Marius Canard, "Le Royaume d'Arménie-Cilicie et les Mamelouks jusqu'au traité de 1285," *Revue des Études Arméniennes* IV (1967): 217–59, 221.

112. Mutaftian, *Kilikian*, 431.

113. Jonathan S. C. Riley-Smith, "Historical Introduction" to *Ayyūbids, Mamlūkes and Crusaders* (Selections from the *Ta'rikh al-Duwal wa'l-Mulūk* of Ibn al-Furāt), 2 vols. (Cambridge: W. Heffer and Sons, 1971), vol. I, xi.

114. Riley-Smith, "Historical Introduction," xii.

115. *Ibid.*, xviii.

116. *Ibid.*, xv.

117. Ibn al-Furât, *Selections from the Ta'rikh al-Duwal wa'l-Mulûk of Ibn al-Furât*, 2 vols., trans. U. and M.C. Lyons (Cambridge: W. Heffer and Sons, 1971), vol. II, 9.
118. Ibid., 102–3.
119. Ibid., 103.
120. Ibid., 125.
121. de Morgan, *History of the Armenian People*, 237.
122. Marco Polo, *The Description of the World*, ed. A. C. Moule and Paul Pelliot (London: Routledge, 1938), 94. For the importance of Ayas see W. Heyd, *Histoire du Commerce du Levant* (reprinted in Leipzig: 1936); Der Nersessian, "Kingdom of Cilician Armenia," 655.
123. Mutaftian, *Kilikian*, 441.
124. de Morgan, *History of the Armenian People*, 239.
125. Mutaftian, *Kilikian*, 443.
126. Ibid., 445–46.
127. Boase, "History of the Kingdom," 28.
128. de Morgan, *History of the Armenian People*, 241..
129. Stewart, *Armenian Kingdom*, 73. See Cahen, *La Syrie du Nord*, 122.
130. Der Nersessian, "The Kingdom of Cilician Armenia," 656; Stewart, *Armenian Kingdom*, 79–81.
131. Stewart, *Armenian Kingdom*, 83.
132. Bar Hebraeus (Grighor Abu'l-Faraj), *The Chronography [of Gregory Abu'l-Faraj, the son of Aaron, the Hebrew Physician commonly known as' Bar Hebraeus, being part of his Political History of the World]*, 2 vols., trans. E. A. Wallis Budge (London: Oxford University Press, 1932), 505.
133. Hayton or Het'um of Corycus, *La Flor des Estoires de la Terre d'Orient*, ed. Ch. Schefer, L. de Mas Latrie, P. E. D. Riant, and Ed. Dulaurier, *RHC Arm*, II, 113–253 [French], 255–366 [Latin], 204.
134. Mutaftian, *Kilikian*, 453.
135. Ibid., 456–57.
136. Boase, "History of the Kingdom," 29.
137. Stewart, *Armenian Kingdom*, 174.
138. de Morgan, *History of the Armenian People*, 246.
139. Quoted by Henry H. Howorth, *The History of the Mongols* III (1888): 579; Der Nersessian, "Kingdom of Cilician Armenia," 658.
140. L. Jerahian, *Patmut'iwn Haykakan Kilikioy* [History of Armenian Cilicia], vol. I (Marseille, 1962), 101.
141. Paguran, *Mi Tesut'iwn Kilikioy Haykakan İşxanut'ean Vray* [A Theory about Armenian Rule over Cilicia] (Nicosia: Azgayin Orpanoc'i Tparan, 1904), 169.
142. Ibid., 180.
143. de Morgan, *History of the Armenian People*, 246.
144. Ibid., 247.
145. Jerahian, *History*, 101.
146. Ibid., 110.
147. de Morgan, *History of the Armenian People*, 249.
148. Ibid., 250.
149. Ibid.

- 150. Ibid., 251.
- 151. Ibid., 252–53.
- 152. Ibid., 253.
- 153. Ibid., 254.
- 154. Ibid., 266.
- 155. Ibid., 267–68.
- 156. Ibid., 271.
- 157. Ibid., 273.

The Cilician Spiritual and Intellectual Legacy between the East and the West

I. Beginnings in the Eleventh Century in the North: Narekac'i, Magistros, and Imastasēr

In Cilicia, theological, sociological, political literature, as well as poetry and the arts constituted a very unique cultural-intellectual phenomenon that only the Cilician condition between the east and the west could produce; hence, the relevance of this chapter to the book, in general. This peculiarity is true of Armenian intellectual culture, in general, as it has always been time/location specific. The direct influence of the Cilician paradigm could not have happened in the north and east of the Armenian habitat in Erzntka, Vaspurakan, Siwnik', and so on.

In the southwest of the historical land between the shores of the Mediterranean and enclosed by mountain ranges, Cilician Armenians interacted with the cultures of the Arabs, Greeks, Turks, Europeans, Ayyūbids, Mamlūks, and Mongols. Their conditions were bound to generate a culture which was very different from that of the Armenians elsewhere in the entire region. Philosophically realistic, theologically ecumenical, and politically pragmatic, this culture was also more open and complex. In many ways, it was the single-most significant Near Eastern equivalent of the European Late Gothic and Proto-Renaissance cultures.

On the crossroads of medieval Christian and Muslim peoples and trends, the Cilicians were the first among the Christians of the East to develop genuinely ecumenical tendencies. These peculiarities grew out of the Cilician condition in a geographic spot where East and West, North and South interacted closely and often violently. Cilician culture became the matrix for the development of western Armenian

intellectual and political traditions. Had circumstances been different during the Ottoman period in the region, a true Armenian renaissance would have materialized in Cilicia by the fourteenth century. These observations do not in any way isolate things Cilician, because Armenian Cilicia was always a continuation and part of the culture on the homeland.

The twelfth and thirteenth centuries in Cilicia came to be known as the *Silver Age* of Armenian culture. Four aspects of this new intellectual culture in a new world are briefly reviewed in this chapter: theology, philosophy, sciences, and miniatures. The authors in focus are Catholicoi Grigor III Pahlawuni, his brother Nersēs Šnorhali, their nephew Grigor IV Tlay, and their close relative Bishop Nersēs Lambronac'i. The social, philosophical, and scientific aspects of the literature of Aygekc'i, Rabuni, and Herac'i are selected as paradigm cases in the Cilician worldview and sciences. Cilician poetry and miniatures are very briefly referred to in the end.

The Cilician condition between the Muslim and Christian East, and Latin and Byzantine West had the seeds of both conflict and enrichment, and Cilician intellectual culture absorbed both; hence, its uniqueness as well. The Silver Age of Armenian culture took shape amid conflict and rivalries and in response to them, Armenian communities everywhere, in eastern Asia Minor, various places of the Near East, and east and west of these regions, became factors in activating the trade and exchange of knowledge and expertise in and through Cilicia. European merchant communities lived in the Cilician coastal cities. They were provided with facilities, schools, and churches. The Bagratunis never could or would issue their own coins, whereas the Cilicians did. The equivalent of a dīnār, the Armenian dahekan, was an internationally accepted currency. Armenian civil laws were first formulated in Cilicia. During the term of King Lewon I, the Assizes of Antioch (translated by the Constable Smbat) was applied and eventually adopted by his successors.¹ In sum, in every respect, the Cilicians were thrown into one of the most dynamic spots of the medieval world, and their intellectual culture reflected the ways in which they responded to them. Even though Cilician culture marked a watershed in Armenian social-cultural history, it still maintained its roots in the cultural revival of the tenth and eleventh centuries on the mainland.

Three figures, in particular, were closely connected to the Cilician Silver Age: Grigor Narekac'i (d. c. 1003, late Arcruni period in Rštunik', Vaspurakan, north east of Cilicia), Grigor Pahlawuni Magistros (d. 1058,

Byzantine duke of Taron and Vaspurakan, in the north and the east of Cilicia), and Yovhannēs Sarkawag-Imastasēr (d. 1129) in Halbat and Sanahin (southern part of the present Republic of Armenia). Cilician aesthetics, lyrical poetry, concepts of nature, man, and religious culture had their inspiration in Narekac'i. Secularization and globalization of learning and its introduction alongside religious studies were contributions of Magistros. Yovhannēs Sarkawag-Imastasēr was probably the most prominent Armenian scholar of the early twelfth century. He initiated an early form of Armenian nominalism, which in its primitive form was a reaction to Platonic realism. The latter accepted the independent existence of the Universals/Ideas, while Nominalists, in general (of the eleventh or twelfth centuries in Europe), accepted them but only as abstract predicates and not as independently existing substances. In the case of so-called Armenian Nominalists (some contemporary scholars question the classification), their position was more in line with Aristotelian metaphysics rather than the familiar debate known as the problem of Universals since Plato's time.

Due to the Cilician circumstances, the legacies of these seminal figures metamorphosed freely and shaped the Silver Age. Narekac'i, Magistros, and Sarkawag were the products of the tenth–eleventh centuries when, despite social–religious unrest in most parts of Armenia, there was also prosperity and progress. This was the “Age of the Kingdoms” in Vaspurakan, Kars, Tašir Joraget, Siwnik', P'āṭisos, Taron, and Tayk'. Ani, Arcn, Kars, Dwin, Van, Ostan, and other locations on trade routes, had begun developing into urban centers. Although the institution of the church faced serious challenges both internally and externally, little, if anything, was changed in its structure and doctrines. The feudal system of the naxarars on the mainland in the north and east of Cilicia was archaic, and the relations between the monarchy and nobility were never regulated in favor of central authority. Urban centers had their own cosmopolitan cultures and morals. As everywhere, material gain, comfort, and position motivated urban society in the newly developing cities just before the Seljuk onslaught. Social-reformist movements—often identified or mixed with religious sects—stormed many areas. Popular culture and arts inevitably evolved in the cosmopolitan conditions of the cities, almost independent of the criteria of the church. In general, contradictory attitudes and outlooks as well as styles of life and thought typified this period just before the fall and/or the migration of all the kingdoms and their population.

Due to economic prosperity, Armenian monasticism also began in the tenth century. The Monastery of Narek under the Arcrunis in Rštunik' became one of the most prominent. The tenth century and the first half of the next were also times of contradictions, such as the authority of the church as opposed to more communalistic trends, spiritualism as opposed to urban materialism, market morality as opposed to medieval patterns of labor and production, urban luxury as opposed to rural poverty, mysticism as opposed to church hierarchy, dissidence as opposed to orthodoxy, and so on.

A. Grigor Narekac'i: Major Paradigm in Armenian Dissident Thought

The prosperity as well as the contradictions of the tenth century found their most sublime expression in the literature of Grigor Narekac'i.² Here lay the authenticity of his work as a microcosmic phenomenon. Approaching this giant as a "saint" or a "mystic" will only impoverish his legacy and otherwise betray a deep ignorance about his work and position. "The most inferior of teachers and the most junior of scholars," as he put it in the Colophon of the "Story of the Cross of Aparan," Grigor or Art'un (vigilant, *grigorios* in Greek, as he explains too) Narekac'i was his only biographer. Four colophons by him and a popular Narekiana, or a cycle of legends sum up all that is known about him. Some recent research has added very little on has been available so far.

He shared the views of his father, Bishop Xosrov Anjewac'i, and his great maternal uncle Anania Narekac'i, both of whom were outspoken critics of the church and the nobility. Similar to the latter, he also was accused of T'ondrakism and heresy. Some monasteries such as Kčaw also explicitly challenged the church, whereas others such as Glajor and Tat'ew adhered to radical conservative positions, collaborating with the nobility and acting as feudal institutions. As discussed, during the tenth century and the first half of the eleventh, Siwnik' and many parts of Armenia were stormed by dissident unrest. Narekac'i wrote in reaction to these circumstances; in fact, he was an exact contemporary of Bishop Yakobos of Hark', who was, in turn, accused and persecuted for his alleged T'ondrakism (as discussed in Volume One).

Narekac'i virtually inaugurated the dawn of individualism in Armenian culture, when he called his poems *personal songs* or songs of Grigor (*Grigori erg*). Three books of the *Matean Otbergut'ean* (*Book of Lamentation and not of Prayer*, as it was commonly called and wrongly, completed just before his death around 1003) and an

“Epistle to the Abbot of the Monastery of Kčaw” (largely based on a text—now lost—by Anania Narekac’i, the abbot of the Monastery of Narek) were devoted to doctrinal issues and heresies. Narekac’i, his father Xosrov Anjewac’i, Anania, and many of their contemporaries were obviously critical and reformist figures. Many of their opinions about church hierarchy, canons, and traditions simply coincided with dissident trends of their age. Since all critical positions were tagged as “T’ondrakian” or “heretical,” these three figures, in turn, were accused of T’ondrakism.

The most talented figure of his age, Narekac’i used literature as a means of both artistic expression and criticism. His *Matean Otbergut’ean* is as much a piece of social history as it is of poetry, philosophy, and theology.

These critical-reformist attitudes and their bold expressions became a part of the legacy of Narekac’i for the Cilician authors of the twelfth century. Almost two centuries later, Cilician intellectuals continued where Narekac’i left off. More tolerant and genuinely reformist figures, they addressed criticism to fossilized practices and shortcomings within and without the church. They also became targets of accusations by the clergy of the great monasteries on the mainland (mostly where the modern Republic is), or the “eastern vardapets.” It is not difficult to see why tenth- and eleventh-century authors in the east were silent about Narekac’i, whereas Cilicians such as Šnorhali and Nersēs Lambronac’i, in particular, were the first who appreciated his work and popularized him; hence, the factor of location and circumstances in Medieval Armenian social and cultural history.

Cilician conditions allowed an intellectual space where the thought and literature of a figure such as Narekac’i could be appreciated and adopted. What was dismissed as T’ondrakism was seen as appropriate and applicable in a land that flourished between Islam and Christianity. In fact, Hřomkla was on the border of Cilicia and often on Muslim-held territory on the Euphrates.

Around 1173, when he was still in his early twenties, Lambronac’i was appointed bishop of Țaršüş and abbot of the Monastery of Skewřa. He commissioned the famous scribe and painter Grigor Skewřac’i to prepare a luxurious copy of the *Matean*. This is the oldest and most elegant copy of this book, and is now at the National Matenadaran in Erevan. It has several illuminations and four portraits of Grigor as “Philosopher” (*imastasēr*), “Vigilant” (*hskot—art’un*), “Worshipper” (*ałot’awor*), and “Rhetorician” (*hřetor*—poet). As understood by the

Cilicians, only one aspect of his personality was religious; otherwise, he was identified as a philosopher, a poet, and a vigilant. This copy also has a brief biography (*vark'*) prepared by Lambronac'i. Furthermore, it was in Cilicia also that he was included in the *Yaysmawurk'* (literally, "this day" is a book of rituals of the Armenian Church, and it includes lives of saints and martyrs) and the *Tonac'owyc'* (literally "book of feasts").³

The literature and generally the aesthetics of Narekac'i were perhaps the most important aspects of his influence on Cilician authors. One of the giants of what may be called the *Ars Nova* or the new arts of the tenth century for their distinct characteristics, the intellectual and theological message of Narekac'i was, nevertheless, marginalized by the church that refused to respond to all reformist demands of the clergy and the populace. He is still the most familiar "great stranger," as I call him. Even though the Cilicians saved him from a worse destiny and transmitted his work, he is still a grossly misrepresented figure.

Similar to the architecture of the tenth century, which T'oramanean described as the new architecture, his literature as well as thought were new in every sense. It was similar to the architecture of the Arcruni and Bagratuni worlds at the time: rich with typically Near Eastern and Islamic ornamentation, intricate and complex in geometric design, new images and symbols. Built around the same decades, every structure in Ani was different from the other; the Church of the Holy Cross at Aht'amar also had no parallels. Architects Trdat in Ani and Manuel in Aht'amar had very different styles and, as such, were a part of the new and more individualistic styles of the period.⁴

What concerns us in this discussion is that during the late tenth century and under the influence of Islamic folklore and culture as well as economic prosperity, many aspects of mundane life became more ornate and elaborate. For the first time, Armenian writers, architects, masons, painters, and craftsmen depicted nature and mundane life and objects as legitimate sources of enjoyment and inspiration. T'ovma Arcruni's detailed descriptions of the church and now destroyed palace of Gagik Arcruni on Aht'amar clearly testify to an explicit intention of the architect as well as Gagik, the master of the palace, to make physical nature a part of the structure and the interior.⁵ These concerns were typical of Near Eastern and Islamic architecture. The Cilicians, in turn, adopted this view of nature in their literature and arts as well. This is the significance of Narekac'i as a link between

the Near Eastern environment and Armenian intellectual culture, particularly in Cilicia.

From the beginning, the Armenians in the peripheral regions in the south and the east—such as Vaspurakan and Taron—were in close contact and interaction with the Persians, Syrians, and Muslims, in general. Consequently, their culture was more syncretistic and open. Often described in “one thousand and one nights” terms, the culture of the Arcrunis in Vaspurakan was closer to the Muslim south and west than to the more austere and provincial north and east of the Armenian homeland. In other words, at the level of mundane culture, folklore, and literature, the southern provinces were very closely connected to the Islamic world. Historically too, the pro-Muslim dissident trends preferred these locations, which were the traditional Borderlands between the Byzantine and Islamic empires anyway, as previously discussed.

In the tenth century, Vaspurakan was under the influence of the Ḥamdānīd amīrs, who controlled the area from Moṣul to Aleppo and all the way to Cilicia from 922 to 1003. The amīr of Aleppo Sayf al-Dawlah or “The Ḥamdānīd” (in Byzantine chronicles)⁶ was known for his flamboyant lifestyle, militancy, and love of poetry and arts.⁷ Perhaps the most famous figure in the region during 945–967, he surrounded himself with poets. Al-Mutanabbī, one of the most important poets in Arabic literature, was at his court for a while, and accompanied him in his journeys and battles. Both of them were in Vaspurakan on the shores of Lake Van, and it is not difficult to imagine that along the local amīrs, Armenian princes also attended Sayf al-Dawlah’s famous *mejlis* (or gathering in his presence).⁸

As of pre-Islamic times, or *al-Jāhiliyah*, poetry was a part of the daily life of Arabs, especially that of the tribal chiefs, the warlords, and their entourage in both urban centers and the desert. This aspect of Muslim culture could not have escaped the attention and interest of the Armenians who lived with the Muslims and seem to have borrowed Arabic poetic forms. Narekac’i was the first who used Arabic rhymed prose or *saja’*. This genre was used on all occasions and for all purposes. He masterfully Armenized it and through the Cilicians, it was assimilated into Armenian literature. He also followed other aspects of Arab poetry such as elaborate descriptions, paraphrases, arabesque-style geometric repetitions, rich vocabulary, emotional intensity, color, and mystical imagery. Otherwise, the musicality of his

language and the intensity of images were also legacies of Armenian pagan culture. Several early medieval authors, even Mesrop Maštoc', made use of similar styles but very sparingly.

Perhaps for the first time and as a man of the church, Narekac'i made a synthesis of many elements from folk, pagan, Christian, and regional cultures. Here lay his genius in creating something that the common people had no difficulty in grasping and the Cilician intelligentsia accepted and popularized. Grigor Magistros, in turn, borrowed sophisticated forms of Arab poetry and the Byzantine styles. However, his initiative was largely formalistic, and he failed as a poet. His significance and success lay in the introduction of secular learning after the Islamic model, into Armenian schools.

The influence of Narekac'i on Cilician culture and generally medieval Armenian culture can be summarized in the following points:

- a. As of Narekac'i, and under the influence of Arab literature and culture, Armenian literature—that was mainly religious and historical—became a tool for individual expression and humanistic objectives. Since it borrowed meanings, forms, images, and idioms from folk culture, it was at least partially secularized and popularized. Through him, and as in Arab and Persian poetry, popular culture officially became a part of intellectual and higher culture. Šnorhali and other Cilicians adopted this approach, as will be discussed next.
- b. For the first time, Narekac'i, in a sense, democratized Christianity when he linked the ordinary man, the peasant, to the supernatural through the poetic word, be it a prayer or just a "song," as he called his poems. The initiative marked a transition from a medieval to a more advanced outlook in almost a proto-renaissance spirit, which was also reminiscent of Armenian dissident trends.
- c. The initiative of Narekac'i to link the divine to the human and vice versa was indeed based on new—and in the eyes of his contemporaries—controversial concepts of Man, God, and Christ as God-Man. For him and most of his predecessors going right back to Maštoc' and Eznik, God was the creator *ex nihilo* of all that is beautiful and good, but otherwise, He was inaccessible to human reason. Based on the basic Christology of the Armenian Church and taking Christ as a model, Narekac'i bridged the human and divine levels by the simple faith of early Christians—also the so-called sects—in the person of Christ the God-Man. The Armenian

Paulician and T'ondrakian dissidents did the same, hence, the alleged "T'ondrakism" of Narekac'i.

- d. Narekac'i took a bold step when he put the individual believer in charge of the process of redemption, thus excluding the mediation of the church and the clergy. In his system, God had done his part through Christ; the rest was the responsibility of the individual and society. In theory, this novel depiction of the relationship between man and God must have signaled the end of the medieval period and the beginning of a new age in Armenian theology, and religious culture, but it did not. Had the church adopted, by some miracle, the theology of Narekac'i, the Reformation would have happened hundreds of years earlier, and it would have happened in Armenia, not in Germany.
- e. Faith bridged man to God, whereas another and equally significant concept, love—which, in fact, was the only Christian commandment for the Paulicians and T'ondrakians—defined the nature of divinity and man's relationship to God. In the system of Narekac'i, love was also the essence of nature, as it radiated through the cycle of life and regeneration.⁹ Almost three centuries later, Kostandin Erznkac'i continued on the same path, doing a synthesis between folk poetry and, more importantly, Persian and Arab poetry. He also was harshly criticized by the church, as will be discussed in Volume Three.
- f. Philosophically, the relationship between God and man—as envisaged by Narekac'i—implied a new concept of man, which, in fact, anticipated the Cartesian self, the "I," or the self-conscious thinking–feeling–doubting subject that was central to all processes. In the tradition of Augustine and as powerful, in the system of Narekac'i, the individual served as the starting point in an existential quest for self-realization and salvation.
- g. This unmediated bridging of God and man through faith and love was a very radical divergence and reflected a new theology and worldview. Reality for Narekac'i was a singularity, and the spiritual and physical levels were parts of the same whole. Similarly, just as life was a totality, and Christ was a whole in His human and divine natures (as per the Christology of the Armenian Church), man also was a whole. By rejecting dualism, Narekac'i was in line with the Eznikian tradition and in opposition to the Paulicians and T'ondrakians, who were dualists. Eznik refuted all forms of dualism, from Platonic metaphysics to Zrwanist, Manichaeism, and

Marcionite versions. Even though the Christology of Narekac'i was generally in line with the position of the Armenian Church, the application of this position to the concepts of God, man, and nature was a dangerously novel step.

- h. Consequently, in the system of Narekac'i, religion was a tool that was used to regenerate man's view of himself, society, and the world around. Intimacy with the divine, his models of "God-becoming-Man," and "Man-becoming-God" achieved a pervasive synthesis between the divine and the human, the physical and the spiritual, and the Cilicians continued where Narekac'i left off, but at a much lower key.
- i. For the Cilicians, the ground was also prepared for natural sciences, and Magistros played a significant role in this regard. Very much in line with the Islamic worldview, nature for Narekac'i was a motive force, an intelligent design, beauty, and a worthy environment for man. The human body was, in turn, a beautiful house for the spirit, as well as for Christ Himself to dwell in.

Defining his work as his "will" and "testament" (*ktak*), Narekac'i considered himself a symbol and a representative of the universal human self; he wrote,

I am the concrete image of all men for I have mixed my sins with everyone's, and having infinitely multiplied my sorrows, I shall lament with them.¹⁰

The *Matean* or his "testament" and poems were indeed a rainbow of songs dedicated to God, man, and nature, connecting the earth to the heavens, inspired by the above and reaching the below, and back.

More than his theology, the aesthetic legacy of Narekac'i was probably the most effective in Cilicia. The poetic impulse of the Cilicians and the vision of the painters found superb and refined guidelines and models in his literature. He practically transmitted the arts of the tenth century—which were Near Eastern in many aspects—to the Cilicians. The latter readily adopted the literary forms, the elaboration in composition, the heavy inclusion of the mundane into the sacred, and, most importantly, the humanism of the arts. As masterpieces of the New Arts of the tenth century, at least aesthetically, the Church of the Holy Cross at Alt'amar and the *Matean* were similar paradigm cases. The Cilicians could not produce architecture of this scale—the concerns

of the nobility and kings were primarily military and political—but the literature and arts became the inheritors of the Narekian legacy.

B. Grigor Pahlawuni—Magistros and Secularization of Knowledge

This erudite nobleman from Bjni and Byzantine Duke over the theme of Mesopotamia was the ancestor of five Cilician intellectuals of the twelfth century and the next important influence on the Cilician Silver Age. In many ways, he was reminiscent of the early renaissance nobility in Europe. Educated in the classics, sciences, and languages, he also saw himself as a social-cultural reformer.¹¹

A devout and conservative Christian, Magistros was a strong proponent of secular education and classical learning. He tutored students and opened schools that were destroyed during the Seljuk invasions. Very much rooted in medieval Islamic traditions, especially of the tenth century, he legitimized secular learning, and this was his unique contribution to Cilician intellectual culture. A champion of Armenian orthodoxy, strict moral norms, and loyalty to authority, his antisectarian campaigns against the T'ondrakians and Arewordik' (Sunworshippers) between 1051 and 1054 occasioned three epistles, in which he provided very valuable information about the doctrines and the customs of these factions. Magistros was the author of around eighty-eight epistles (*t'ut'*) and several translations and treatises now mostly lost. In addition to Greek, he knew Syriac and Arabic, and was on friendly terms with Arab amīrs.¹²

Interested in both the Arabic and Greek cultures of the region, Magistros did many translations and became the initiator of another major phase of Armenian translations at the hands of the twelfth-century intellectuals in Cilicia. He admired Homer, translated Plato's *Timaeus* and *Phaedo*, Euclid's *Geometry*, some Syriac texts, and so on. In the schools he had established, he introduced something such as the seven liberal arts or the Trivium and Quadrivium, in addition to the Greek language and mythology.¹³ The object of his inquiry was the knowledge of all beings in their true nature, said Magistros (*čanač'emk' zgoyut'iwn goyin*)¹⁴ As of Magistros and for the first time, education meant a training in grammar, languages, mathematics, natural sciences, philosophy, logic, poetry, and theology. In short, after the Arabic model at the time, secular learning was officially inaugurated by Magistros.

Through him also, interest was renewed in Dawit' Anhaṭ', Anania Širakac'i, and other Neoplatonic authors of the sixth and seventh centuries.¹⁵ Following Anhaṭ', Magistros divided the sciences into

physics, mathematics, and theology.¹⁶ He was more inclined toward basic Aristotelian rationalism and natural theology. He tried to hold two opposite principles simultaneously: the secular perspective of the classical tradition and natural sciences, on the one hand, and the theological-Christian perspective that relied heavily on revelation and faith, on the other.¹⁷ Narekac'i resolved the problem but only aesthetically and through the principle of the individual man. He had some training in classical philosophy and Greek but otherwise, he had no theoretical concerns.

In his academic projects, Magistros was indeed an early humanist¹⁸ but otherwise, he was a dogmatic and an arrogant aristocrat who ridiculed anyone who dared to express their opinions about sciences or ventured into the secrets of knowledge, which he believed he had mastered.¹⁹

As a mediocre poet, Magistros had no emulators or followers, because his poems were convoluted, manneristic, and obscured by forced references and vocabulary. Over a century later only, his great-grandsons Lambronac'i, Šnorhali, and Grigor Tlay liberated verse from rigid meters and vocabulary. Following Narekac'i and Near Eastern popular poetry, they used vernacular forms, thus officially inaugurating lyrical poetry that was accessible to the people and for the people. In general, it seems that Arabic and Persian poetry had their admirers among Armenians. For example, in Erzinka, Kostandin Erznkac'i was asked by his friends to compose a poem after the famous *Shahnamē* of the Persian poet Firdūsī.²⁰

C. Yovhannēs Sarkawag—Imastasēr—Forerunner of the Second Phase of Armenian Philosophy

Yovhannēs Sarkawag (John, the deacon-philosopher, d. 1129) of Hałbat and Sanahin was the director of the school of Hałbat, then Sanahin (both in the north of the present republic). A well-known scholar, he regulated and fixed the Armenian calendar (which starts at AD 551) and wrote a history of Armenians (now lost). Sarkawag adopted the educational policy of Magistros and insisted on the significance of secular sciences along theology, because the latter were insufficient for the education of students.²¹

Similar to most medieval Armenian authors, a moderate rationalist, Sarkawag may be said to be a proto-nominalist. In the Eznikian tradition, he also tried to find rational grounds for Christian doctrines and used the cosmological argument for the existence of God (taking

God as the First Cause and pure actuality, and proving God's existence through His creations). He seemed to be familiar with Aristotelian metaphysics and logic,²² but in his effort to rationalize faith, Sarkawag fell into difficulties. The concept of ex-nihilo creation was one of these, and he saw the solution of the problem in faith. "By faith," he said, "we know that the world is created by God and that nothing is eternal or self-created, as the pagan [Greek] philosophers believed."²³ Failure to reach convincing explanations led him to adopt a mild form of skepticism about the limits of human reason. With regard to the moot points in the life of Christ, he left them to divine wisdom that was inaccessible to human reason. Again, in the tradition of Eznik, he rejected the opposition of matter and spirit, not from Aristotelian standpoints, but based on the Christology of the Armenian Church, or the "two natures in one" formula. In Christ, the two—or matter and spirit—became one, he said; the matter rose to the level of the spirit, the spirit descended to matter, and they became one.²⁴ This was the Narekian solution of the problem as well.

According to Sarkawag, nothing was in perfect harmony, and in matter also, conflict caused perpetual change.²⁵ From purely theological positions, he was on dangerous grounds when he said that even though matter was created by God, it, nevertheless, moved by its own laws. Motion, in turn, was explained in terms of Aristotelian principles of potentiality and actuality.²⁶ Identifying the soul with the mind, he explained that as Christ was a unity, man also was a unity of body and soul. However, when it came to the tripartite soul, he struggled with the idea, but was very clear about his rejection of Platonic dualism.²⁷ External realities existed independently of our consciousness of them, and knowledge could be acquired only by empirical experience. Sarkawag also had interesting views on the generation of bodies and the sphericity of the world.²⁸ This kind of a philosophy served as a basis for the Cilician authors of the twelfth century; hence, the significance of Sarkawag in studying the intellectual grounds of the Cilician Silver Age.

II. The Silver Age in a New World: Theology, Philosophy, and Arts

The Silver Age of Armenian intellectual culture in Cilicia during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was also the third phase in Armenian translations. The first phase followed the inception of the alphabet at the beginning of the fifth century; the second and lesser phase was during the eighth century under direct Arab rule. Relative peace and

economic prosperity on the mainland from the tenth to the fourteenth centuries allowed the flourishing of monasteries and monastic schools, and a new phase of intellectual revival was at hand in Cilicia.

Armenian philosophical literature had its beginnings in Eznik's polemical-apologetic work and within the next century, Dawit' Anhatt' and Anania Širakac'i were the major figures of the age. Yovhan Ōjnec'i Imastasēr in the early eighth century used philosophy for theological and polemical purposes, but strictly philosophical literature receded after him. During the tenth century, the Armenian Church was again seriously challenged by genuinely pious but intellectually and philosophically sophisticated figures such as Narekac'i, Magistros, and Sarkawag. Through the latter two, interest in philosophy and secular sciences was revived, and translations became integral parts of these developments.

A. Cilician Translations and the Armenian Version of the Chronicle of Michael the Syrian

Living outside the mainland surrounded by both western and eastern peoples and cultures, most Cilician authors knew at least one foreign language and were more open to other religious and intellectual cultures. As per the specific needs and interests of a sovereign state and cosmopolitan societies, the selected texts for translation were less theoretical and more targeted. The objective seemed to be the acquisition of practical information that regulated the affairs of the state and society. Jurisprudence, medicine, agriculture, crafts, and trade were such fields. Translations were done from Syriac, Greek, French, and Arabic.

Until the twelfth century, Armenians had no law codes. In Cilicia, the Assizes of Antioch, the corpus of Byzantine law, and other civil laws in the region were translated and implemented. Among the medical texts, a work by Faraj the Syrian was translated. Manuals for copper smelting, sword-making, animal husbandry, as well as astrology and astronomy were also translated. Catholicos Grigor Martyrophil was particularly fond of patristic literature and translated a great number of such texts. Many after him continued this genre. Theological works were translated into Classical Armenian (or grabar), whereas practical texts were done in the middle and vernacular Armenian, which was obviously for greater accessibility. Arab authors had made great advances in mathematics, cosmology, natural sciences, and medicine, and Armenians in Cilicia and Erzrnka (as we shall see in

Volume Three) had great respect for Arab sciences, medicine, arts, and crafts. Pure philosophy, however, had a very limited number of followers, but most classical works seem to have been available in translation.

The *Chronicle* of Michael the Syrian is perhaps one of the most important translations of the thirteenth century.²⁹ A version was first published in 1870 at St. Yakob, Jerusalem. In 1871, a second publication followed from another manuscript (dated 1248) from the Monastery of Akneř. The scribe is Grigor Akneř'i. Also known as Akanc' Anapat, this monastery was active from the twelfth to fourteenth centuries. It was built on the southern slopes of the Cilician Taurus Mountains, around forty kilometers northwest of the city of Sis on the upper reaches of the Jihun River. It became famous for its scriptorium and unique school of illumination and graphic arts, and had one of the biggest collections of manuscripts.³⁰

Until the discovery of a Syriac copy at the end of the nineteenth century, the *Chronicle* was read in the Armenian translations, none of which was complete or literal. Even though the Armenian versions present little value today—as far as the reconstruction of the original text is concerned—a comparison reveals the disposition of the Armenians toward the various events and figures of the period. As I have shown in a study conducted on the comparison of one of the Armenian versions with the original (in a French translation by Chabot), in many contexts, the information and the interpretation are not the author's but that of the translator/scribe interjecting to suggest the Armenian perspective. Obvious interpolations and/or omissions from the original text also serve the same purpose. In this respect, the Armenian versions present great value for scholars in medieval Armenian and Near Eastern histories.

Catholicos Kostandin I Barjrbērdc'i (1221–1267) ordered the translation of the *Chronicle* and in 1216, Priest Dawit' began the monumental task, which was completed in 1229 by others.³¹ The Catholicos ordered another translation in 1248. No reason is mentioned for this second initiative. The translators were a native speaker Vardan, who according to Alishan is the famous scholar Vardan Arewelc'i³², and a Syrian priest-scholar-physician known as Ishokh or Yesu (among Armenians). Yesu was also the translator of four other works of Michael the Syrian³³: *Jairn K'ahanayut'ean* (Sermon of Ministry), *Xostovanut'iwn Hawatoy* (Confession of Faith, 1169, addressed to Emperor Manuel), *Vasn Astičanac' Hawatoy* (Concerning the Degrees

of Faith), and *Gawazanagirk'* (Book of Catholicoi). Soon, copies of the Armenian translation/s of the *Chronicle* became available in monastic libraries and were used as an authoritative source about regional history for Armenians. Most of our information about the translation is derived from two colophons of the manuscript used for the 1871 Jerusalem publication.³⁴

Initially made for missionary purposes, Unit'orist translations from major Latin philosophers and theologians caused a qualitative change. There was an Armenian–Franciscan monastery in the village of Jorjor (Artaz), and a Dominican Monastery in the village of K'rna in Naxijewan. Bartholomew of Bologna (or Marała) and Peter of Aragon were prominent Unit'orists. Among others, some works of Thomas Aquinas were translated and became available in the seminaries of Glajor and Tat'ew. Esayi Nč'ec'i, Yovhan Orotneč'i, and Grigor Tat'ewac'i were well acquainted with scholastic literature and despite their radical "orthodoxy," they also assimilated many elements of Aquinian theology.

B. Vkasasēr/Martyrophil, Grigor III, Šnorhali, Grigor IV Tlay, and Nersēs Lambronac'i

The hundred years from the settlement of the Rubenids in eastern Cilicia to the conversion of the Barony into a kingdom (in 1198) were unstable yet very productive times. The state, the newly rising nobility, the church, and the society were in rapid yet uneven evolution. Along the new military and feudal nobility connected to the Het'umid and Rubenid Princes, urban merchant and professional classes appeared mainly on the coast. The peasantry on agricultural lands remained marginal and in primitive conditions. Relations between the Rubenids and the Cilician feudal lords, and generally, the patterns of production and exchange varied from the mainland in the north and the east. The political and military successes of the nobility and economic prosperity had little positive effect on the rural population, and the peasantry suffered exploitation by the clergy, nobility, and the newly formed urban merchant classes or the mecatuns. The rich increased their wealth, whereas peasants lived in rampant poverty with no resources and rights.³⁵ Lambronac'i, Yovhannēs Kozeṛn, and others always spoke of the deterioration of social conditions, morals, and faith. A more radical figure, Matt'ēos Urhayec'i, or the famous historian Matthew of Edessa, blamed the Franks for social–moral decadence.

In the complex circumstances of Cilicia the Church—which still provided and controlled intellectual culture—was a highly politicized institution between the Syrian, Latin, and Byzantine churches and a variety of Muslim religious cultures. The condition, however, allowed a qualitative leap in its evolution and produced five of the most important figures of the twelfth century and medieval Armenian intellectual and religious culture. These were catholicoi Grigor II V kayasēr/ Martyrophil, Grigor III Pahlawuni, Nersēs IV Šnorhali, Grigor IV Tłay, and Bishop Nersēs Lambronac'i. Their cultural politics and political culture were responses to the period and even though they were not philosophers in the strict sense, not even trained in these sciences, they stood very close to a basic Aristotelian position that during the next century would culminate in what may be called a Cilician "nominalism" (in a very restricted sense). The intellectual position of these figures as well as the political status of the kingdom found conceptual expressions in the philosophy of Vahram Rabuni during the next century. Furthermore, a similar orientation can be found in the social philosophy of Vardan Aygekc'i, the medical science of Herac'i, and the manuscript illuminations of T'oros Rōslyn and Sargis Picak.³⁶

The philosophical legacy derived from all the aspects of the literature and the arts qualify Cilician culture to be the single-most significant Near Eastern equivalent of the European Late Gothic and proto-Renaissance phases. A quick comparison between the *Matean* of Narekac'i and Dante's *Divine Comedy* (written three centuries later) reveals surprising similarities in the bold and controversial (for the age) initiative to raise human beings from the hell of sin/inferno to heaven and the presence of the divine, solely by their own moral-intellectual drive and faith. The poetic style, the colors, the actual social milieu and comment, the historical vision, and so on are very intriguing elements for a massive project in this regard.

The cosmopolitan city of Erznka on the upper reaches of the Western Euphrates in the north had its unique circumstances first under the Seljuks and then under the Mongols. It saw a cultural awakening in the thirteenth and even the fourteenth centuries. Closely linked to Cilicia through the great trade routes and in all other respects, the intellectual culture of this city can be considered a part of the Cilician and western Armenian intellectual legacy. The literary cultures and traditions of both Cilicia and Erznka shed light on the circumstances in the medieval cities of eastern Asia Minor where the Armenians lived, from Ayratat to Cappadocia and from Trebizond to Antioch.³⁷

Given next are very brief references to the four figures of the Silver Age in Cilicia.

Grigor II V kayasēr, Martyrophil (incumbency 1066–1105), or Vahram, son and successor of Magistros as Duke of Mesopotamia, was the second catholicos elected in Camndaw outside Bagratid Ani. The forty-year incumbency of this learned Pahlawuni coincided with a period of drastic changes. Armenian communities were spread on a very vast area from Upper Mesopotamia to Egypt (which he visited at least once). A forerunner of the Cilician Silver Age, he was a politically flexible and an ideologically tolerant figure. Due to his love and translations of early patristic literature, he was surnamed *Vkayasēr* or *Martyrophil* (lover of literature on the lives of martyrs and saints).

Grigor III Pahlawuni (incumbency 1113–1166) was the first intellectual figure of the Cilician period. He was the son of Prince Apirat of Cowk' and the great-grandson of Magistros (grandson of a daughter of Magistros, Martyrophil was his father's maternal uncle). A tall and handsome youth, similar to most of the descendents of Magistros, he also wrote poetry, was involved in translations but, more importantly, he regulated the liturgical canons (*karg*) of the church.

Nersēs IV Klayec'i Šnorhali (1102–1173, incumbency 1166–1173)—a close associate and the younger brother of Grigor III—was perhaps the most popular and famous of the five Cilicians. Born in 1100 in Covk', he was orphaned at a very young age. He and his elder brother (future catholicos Grigor IV Tlay) were sent to the Monastery of Šuṛr or Karmir Vank' (east of Mar'ash, near Kaysūm, earlier in the land of Philaretus and Goṭ Vasil) under the protection of Catholicos Barseṭ I Anec'i (1105–1113). They studied under its abbot, Step'anos Manuk. Nersēs was ordained at the age of twenty, and in 1150, he became bishop at Hromkla. In 1166, three months before the death of his brother Grigor III that same year and by the latter's wish, he was elected catholicos. He spent the last third of his life (1150–1173) at Hromkla (thus called *Hromklayec'i* or *Klayec'i*).³⁸ Called *Šnorhali* (graceful) for his many talents, Nersēs was one of the most prolific authors of medieval Armenian literature. He wrote a long poem called "Lament of Edessa" (Oṭb Edesioy) at the request of his brother Šahan's son, Grigor Apirat, who was an eyewitness of the destruction of this city in 1144 by the Seljuk Turks. In the tradition of Magistros, he also wrote a concise Armenian history in a single poem (a mediocre work). His theological ideas are scattered in a number of letters or epistles.

The earliest of these were *Ban Hawatoy* (Profession of Faith), which was written in 1151, addressed to Byzantine Prince Alexios in 1165, and a letter to Emperor Manuel Komnenos in 1167 (where he declined an invitation to Constantinople for church union talks).

The immediate inspiration of Šnorhali was Narekac'i and he emulated the latter in his spiritual and lyrical poems. As mentioned, it was through him and his nephew Lambronac'i that the literary legacy of Narekac'i was recovered and restored. Šnorhali was practically the first who implemented and popularized didactic and lyrical verses on secular themes. He wrote simple and very rhythmical lyrics, and their melodies, parables, and puzzles were used at gatherings, feasts, and schools. The "Encyclical Letter" (*Gir Šrġaberakan* or *T'ut' Ĕndhanrakan*) of Šnorhali on the occasion of his election is, in turn, one of the most important theological texts of the period. Another epistle is almost of equal significance. It addresses the problem of the conversion of the Armenian Sunworshippers or the Arewordik' of Samosata. For the first time, we find a direct link between these sectarians and the Bogomils—as Šnorhali also calls them—or the Paulicians, whom the Greeks transplanted in the Balkans. This epistle is a major source for the history of Armenian sects.³⁹

Grigor IV Tlay (incumbency: 1173–1193) was the son of Vasil, Prince of Cowk' and the younger brother of Šnorhali. After his father's death in 1148, his mother took him to his uncles (Grigor III and Nersēs) at Hromkla, where he was educated.⁴⁰ To be distinguished from Grigor III and for his youth as well, this catholicos was surnamed *Tlay* (youth, boy). When Nersēs Šnorhali died in 1173, there was an ambiguous period of two years. Grigor Apirat was locum tenens and was then probably self-appointed catholicos. In 1175, Grigor IV Tlay was elected by the intervention/assistance of Great Prince Mleh and Nūr ed-Dīn.⁴¹ Inheriting ecclesiastical issues about union with Byzantine and Latin churches, he was involved in negotiations, correspondence, and debates with the clergy on the mainland as well. In 1179, he summoned a Pan-Armenian Ecclesiastical Council at Hromkla. The council issued epistles addressed to the emperor and the patriarch in Constantinople, clarifying the Armenian position and refusing to accept the Byzantine conditions.⁴² It was on his advice that Mxit'ar Herac'i wrote his famous *Ćermanc' Mxit'arut'iwn* (Remedy for Illnesses); also, it was by his initiative that Samvël Anec'i prepared the *Hawak'munk' i Groc' Patmagrac'* (Collection of the Works of Historians). His theological ideas are found in his various treatises but, in particular, in his letters

dealing with the union of churches. They were addressed to four groups: the Greeks, the Armenian clergy in the great monasteries on the mainland in the east, Rome, and allegedly, Ṣalāḥ ed-Dīn.⁴³ The correspondence with the latter is an undecided and poorly researched subject that needs extensive research. Until that time, all information is considered circumstantial.

Nersēs Lambronac'i (1153/1154–1198)—champion and victim of reform and ecumenism—by his baptismal name Smbat, Lambronac'i was a cousin of Grigor IV Tlay (his paternal aunt's son). He was a son of Prince Ošin of Lambron, who was also closely related to Šnorhali, and was educated at the Monastery of Skewria by Yovhannēs Vardapet. In 1169, at the age of sixteen, his mother took him to Hromkla and placed him in the care of Catholicos Nersēs Šnorhali. In 1172, he returned to Lambron and withdrew to a monastery. An introverted and extremely erudite youth who spent his time reading, he traveled to Cyprus in search of a more private life, but was urged by his family to return to Cilicia and the church. It was at this time that he must have become a vardapet.

In 1176, at the age of twenty-two, Lambronac'i was ordained bishop by Grigor IV. He began writing interpretations on Armenian liturgy and commentaries. He expressed deep discontentment toward disorders in the church and the corruption clergy.⁴⁴ In 1179, he became the bishop of Tarşuş and the Abbot of the Monastery of Skewria. It was by his request that Grigor Arewelc'i (then called *Skewriac'i*) was invited to the Monastery of Skewria to introduce and teach the art of manuscript illuminations there.⁴⁵ As just mentioned, Lambronac'i was in his early twenties when he commissioned Grigor Skewriac'i to prepare a luxurious copy of the *Matean* of Grigor Narekac'i.

The reformist and ecumenical career of Lambronac'i is also closely linked to church union negotiations, to Cilician ecumenism, and, more importantly, to the debates with eastern clergy. Soon after the election of Grigor IV Tlay, the debates around church union accelerated. The nine demands previously posed by Emperor Manuel I Komnenos to Šnorhali were again raised. Manuel sent a letter to Catholicos Grigor that was delivered by the prominent Greek scholar Theophanos, who, however, returned to Constantinople before reaching Cilicia because of Greek–Seljuk wars on the way. The letter was delivered at a later date by a messenger to Hromkla. In his reply in 1175, the Catholicos asked to review and modify the nine points.⁴⁶ In 1177, the emperor sent his second letter to Grigor IV Tlay, in which he

considered the differences as simply “misunderstandings,” but he still praised Byzantine Christology and urged the catholicos to resolve the matter.⁴⁷

In view of the gravity of the dispute, the Catholicos summoned a council to study Emperor Manuel's second letter and reply by common consent. He sent invitations to all the Armenian religious institutions, centers, and communities. The position and the role of the eastern and/or northern vardapets became crucial and as an ecumenical figure, Lambronac'i was on the forefront while⁴⁸ the primate of Sanahin, old Grigor Tutēordi led the clergy on the eastern mainland. Judging by the correspondence between the Catholicos and eastern clergy, it seems that the easterners found the westerners “unfaithful to their national traditions.” Furthermore, they considered the Greek proposals as covers for Nestorianism, hence, the necessity to reject them altogether and to sever all communication with Byzantium.

In his two letters to Grigor Tutēordi, Grigor IV Tlay clearly stated that the Cilicians wanted to come to terms with the Greeks without any compromises or concessions at either doctrinal or administrative levels and without deviating from the path of the holy fathers of the Armenian Church. He said that the Cilicians did not want to and could not anyway withdraw or avoid confrontation. He advised the easterners to “stand up against them [Greeks] courageously.” The catholicos reiterated his commitment to the first three universal councils (preceding Chalcedon in 451, Nicaea in 325, Constantinople in 381, and Ephesus in 431), as the peripheries of Armenian orthodoxy drawn by the Holy Fathers from Grigor the Illuminator, to Ōjnec'i, Grigor II Martyrophil, and Šnorhali.⁴⁹

III. Church Union and the Predicament of the Cilicians—the Literature

The careers of Nersēs Šnorhali, his brother and successor Grigor Tlay and Nersēs Lambrobac'i mark one of the most important phases of the history of the Armenian Church and the people at that vital junction. While the Cilician princes were struggling for some sort of autonomy in the midst of the Muslims, Franks, and Byzantines, church union was, in turn, a part of regional conflict. It was a political issue. Byzantine pressures were very old and continued with force till the end of the twelfth century, whereas the price that was demanded for the survival of the kingdom, as it were, was the union with the Latin Church.

In 1138–1139, the Latin Synod of Antioch marks a symbolic beginning for Latin–Armenian ecclesiastical high-level contacts. It was called by the papal legate “to examine the legal aspects of the election” of a candidate for the patriarchal office of Antioch. Catholicos Grigor III and Nersēs were invited as guests, and after the synod, the catholicos accompanied Cardinal Bishop Alberic of Ostia on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, where Grigor III attended a meeting of the Latin Church, as reported by William of Tyre.⁵⁰ There were probably discussions about the differences between the Armenian and Catholic Churches. According to Lambronac’i, on the encounter between the Armenian and Latin hierarchs, the pope sent Grigor III a letter of greeting with a staff and a pallium.⁵¹ Correspondence on church union negotiations would start in 1165.

The most important consequence of these processes is the clarification of the position of the Armenian Church. The literature includes several documents. A compilation was made not later than 1183.⁵² The text (as in the Jerusalem edition used here) consists of three main sections:

- a. “The Universal letter of Nersēs catholicos of Armenians,” addressed to the Armenians (1–83).
- b. “The letters that Manuel, king of the Greeks and Holy Catholicoi of the Armenians, Nersēs and Grigoris wrote to each other on the question of unity. In addition, there is correspondence with Ecumenical Patriarch Michael III Anchialus of Constantinople” (87–199). In this edition, there is a eulogy by Nersēs Lambronac’i: “Eulogy on the Life of Nersēs the Gracious with historical narratives” (217–28).
- c. “The Letters of Lord Nersēs, the catholicos of Armenians written at different times to different persons” (207–329).

There is also the controversial report, or the *Dialexis* of Byzantine delegate Theoriānos known as “The Dialogue of Orthodox Theorianos with the Armenian Catholicos.”⁵³ In addition, there are various references to church union negotiations in the histories of Matthew of Edesssa, Samvël Anec’i, Vardan Arewelc’i, and Smbat Sparapet.

The title of this compilation is known as “The Universal Encyclical of St. Nersēs the Gracious.” The specific title is “*Patčar xndroy miabanut’ean t’agaworin hořomoc’ Manuēli ew srhoc’ Kat’olikosac’n hayoc’ Nersēsi ew Grigorisi t’ult’kn zor grec’in ar mimeans*” [The letters that Manuel, King of the Greeks and Holy Catholicoi of the Armenians,

Nersēs, and Grigoris wrote to each other on the question of unity] (Jerusalem, 1871).⁵⁴

Šnorhali has three confessions of faith of the Armenian Church, according to Catholicos Aram I Keshishian. The first of these was written in 1165, a year before the death of Catholicos Grigor III. This profession of faith or "*Gir Hawatoy*" was submitted to Alexios, the Byzantine Duke of Mamistra, and a son-in-law of Emperor Manuel. It became the first text in a long series of letters, and a part of the negotiations on church union. The details about a meeting between Alexios and Šnorhali are not recorded, but it is said that some sort of a report on the proceedings was sent to Byzantium.⁵⁵

This "Profession of Faith" starts with a preamble, in which Nersēs explains that it is based on the Armenian patristic tradition. It is followed by the confession of orthodox faith. The unity of the person of Christ is central to his Christology. Supporting his discussion by direct references to the Bible and the Fathers, in the second section, Nersēs deals with rites, practices, and liturgical traditions, such as the dates of the Nativity and the Baptism of Christ, the Annunciation, the song of St. Mary, the formula of one nature, the preparation of the Holy Chrism (*miwron*), veneration of images, nailing of crosses, fasting, mixing water with wine, blessing of crosses, corruptibility of Christ's body, fasting of precedent and the Trisagion. The Trisagion, a Greek term meaning "thrice holy" in Latin *Tersanctus*, is a standard hymn of the Divine Liturgy in most of the Eastern Orthodox Churches, Oriental Orthodox Churches, and Eastern Catholic Churches. In Western Christianity the *Sanctus*—a different formula—is used in the Mass.⁵⁶ Emperor Manuel's response to the first Profession of Faith was sent to Catholicos Grigor Tlay. It was delivered by Smbat, who was one of the closest advisors of the emperor.⁵⁷

In his first letter, as published in the compiled correspondence just mentioned,⁵⁸ Manuel reiterated the factors of unity and praised the positive disposition of Nersēs toward Constantinople. In 1166, Grigor III died, and his brother Nersēs succeeded him. Smbat invited the newly elected Catholicos Nersēs to visit Constantinople.⁵⁹ In his reply to Manuel's first letter, the catholicos apologized because of the political circumstances in Cilicia, and suggested that the emperor himself initiate a peace mission into the east. He was also critical about the Byzantine persecutions of Armenians, the destruction of churches, and other oppressive measures to convert them to Chalcedonianism, which would contribute to division instead of union.

Nersēs welcomed the visit of the pope's legate to Constantinople in search of church union. He informed Manuel of the visit of a delegation from the Syrian Church to Hromkla and concluded his letter by warning against feelings of superiority and resentment. He observed that relations should not be based on master-slave patterns, but on a feeling of unity in Christ.⁶⁰

In 1166, "*Sahmank' Hawatoy*" or "Definitions of Faith," the next text, was written at the request of Manuel's legate Smbat. It was a summary of the doctrinal position of the Armenian Church. The full title was "*Sahmank' hawatoy hayastaneayc' eketwoy greal Nersisi Kat'ulikosi i xndroy astuacasēr t'agaworin hořomoc' Manuēli*" (The Definitions of Faith of the Armenian Church, written by Nersēs, Catholicos of Armenians, at the Request of Manuel, the God-loving King of the Greeks).⁶¹ As Nersēs says, the "Definition" repeats the "Profession." It is, however, more systematic and focuses on the question of Christ's one or two natures, which forms the core of the debates. It is believed that this document and the covering letter were received very positively and eased the process of negotiations.⁶² As Catholicos Karekin II/I Sarkissian said, the "Profession of Faith" and the "Definition of Faith" are the clearest statements of the doctrinal position of the Armenian Church.⁶³

The third text by Nersēs was written in 1169. It is "*Patasxani t't'uyn meci t'agaworin Hořomoc' Kir Manuēli, greal srboyn Nersisi Kat'ulikosi vasn čšmarit dawanut'ean hawatoy hayastaneayc' eketec'woy*" [The reply of Catholicos St. Nersēs to the letter of the great king Manuel of the Greeks, on the true profession of faith of the Armenian Church].

Around 1169–1170, two delegates arrived in Hromkla. They were Lezion Master Theorianos, a theologian and philosopher, and Uttman, the abbot of an Armenian monastery in Philippopolis, Thrace (now in Bulgaria). They brought a second letter from Emperor Manuel. There is no mention of his invitation and the excuse of Nersēs, nor of the delay in responding to the *Sahmank'*.⁶⁴

According to the report of Theorianos, or the *Dialexis*, Nersēs and Theorianos had lengthy discussions on the Cyrilian formula of "one nature of the Word incarnate."⁶⁵ It seems that no common ground was found by the two sides, and the delegation left with a letter by Nersēs. The existence of a second and secret letter is mentioned by Theorianos, but is not confirmed.⁶⁶ It was at this time that Nersēs wrote the third profession of faith or the "Reply" (*Patasxani*) just mentioned. In the so-called "secret letter," the Catholicos allegedly accepted Byzantine

Christology at the price of antagonizing the Armenians. The "Reply" is the shortest and clearest of the three documents. The "one nature" as per the Cyrilian formula is restated. The Catholicos is open to discussions about "two natures" without contradicting the principle of "unity" of Christ's person. The novelty in this document is related to the need for consultation and consensus in the Armenian Church before Armenians could give a definitive answer to the emperor.⁶⁷

On February 20, 1172, a year before the death of Catholicos Nersēs, the Byzantine delegation again headed by Theorianos and Uttman arrived in Hromkla. Circulars were sent to Armenian clergy everywhere to prepare for an urgent council. The Byzantine delegation brought two letters, one from the Emperor Manuel and another from the Ecumenical Patriarch Michael. The emperor observed that Armenians poorly interpreted the Cyrilian formula and attached the famous "nine points" to his letter. The first three were Christological; the rest dealt with feasts, liturgy, practices, and the election of the catholicos.⁶⁸ The letters were read at a meeting in Hromkla, but no decision was reached in the absence of any representative from the churches and monasteries on the mainland in the east. It seemed that organizing a general council of the Armenian Church would be made possible only the next summer. Disappointed at the delay, and probably to intimidate the Catholicos, Theorianos threatened to reveal what he called a "secret letter" by the latter addressed to the emperor in which he had already made concessions in order to achieve church union.⁶⁹

From the beginning, and without directly taking part or being invited to do so, the Syrian Church closely followed the church union talks. In response to a letter—now lost—by the Patriarch of Antioch Michael the Syrian, Nersēs sent an elaborate explanation about the process and the rumors. There were accusations of Julianism addressed by the Syrians against the Armenians. On their part, the Armenians reminded the Syrians that they had always remained faithful to the Nicaean creed.

According to the Armenian version of the Chronicle, Michael the Syrian is reported as saying that Nersēs asked his opinion on five proposals of Greeks: declaring two natures in Christ, accepting the Council of Chalcedon, celebrating the Nativity of Christ on December 25, using leavened bread and mixing water in the wine, and singing the Trisagion without the words "who was crucified."⁷⁰

On Thursday, August 13, 1173, Catholicos Nersēs passed away, and Grigor IV Tlay succeeded him. Theorianos was again sent to Cilicia,

but circumstances prevented his journey. The letter of Manuel arrived by a traveler. The response, in turn, was sent by a priest called Constantine.⁷¹ Totally committed to church union, Grigor IV invited the entire Armenian clergy to Hromkla. In response to the harsh criticism of the clergy on the mainland, he wrote,

The Greeks have invited us once and twice. Should we not respond to them boldly either agree with them or make them agree with us? If they insist on the two natures, we shall refute and chide them; if they change, we shall receive them and gain brothers . . . Even if nothing is achieved, we shall have at least shown to them our good will.⁷²

A general council of the Armenian Church was convened at Hromkla on Easter Day, 1180. The "Profession" and "Definition" were reiterated. The eastern bloc was again absent but was represented (tacitly) by Bishop Barset of Ani. The nine points were withdrawn from the agenda to avoid further debates. Nersēs Lambronac'i had prepared his famous "Speech" (*Atenabanut'iwñ*), which, however, he did not read, or probably was not allowed to. This twenty-six-year-old bishop of Țarșuș was already suspected of western sympathies and even treachery. In his speech and as always, he had emphasized the equality of all men before God and the necessity to develop tolerance. In this context, he wrote,

The Armenian always cries out 'thank you God for not creating me Greek'; and the Greek repeats the same, thanking God that he was not created an Armenian.⁷³

The council prepared two documents addressed to the emperor. In these letters, the basic tenets of Armenian Christology were cited, and the Armenians vowed loyalty to the traditions of the Christian church. Chalcedonian principles were rejected, yet peaceful coexistence and tolerance were advised. The documents were signed by thirty-three bishops, but before the Byzantine delegates returned to Constantinople, Emperor Manuel died on September 27, 1180, and the process was halted. Persecutions of Armenians on Byzantine-controlled territories in central and eastern Asia Minor intensified and in 1184, Grigor IV sent a delegation to the pope asking him to intervene to stop the persecutions by Emperor Isaac II Angelos (1185–1195). In his reply during the same year, the pope made his own suggestions to the Armenians. Lambronac'i, who knew Latin, translated the letter that

arrived in Țarșuș.⁷⁴ The Armenians were in a true impasse. In 1187, after Salāḥ ed-Dīn's conquest of Jerusalem when the Third Crusade was at the doors of Cilicia in 1090, Lambronac'i was chosen by Prince Lewon to welcome Emperor Frederick Barbarossa at the head of a delegation, and present the request to convert the principality into a kingdom.

When in 1193 Grigor IV Țlay died, with the support of the clergy on the mainland, an adolescent priest called Vahram, a cousin of the Catholicos, was elected as Catholicos Grigor V. This youth soon caused discontent, and Lambronac'i in turn was critical of the pontiff. After less than two years, Grigor V was taken to the fortress of Kapitara (allegedly for a meeting or a counseling, or as a prisoner). He died in an attempt to escape, hence, his epithet *Karavēž* (fallen off rocks).⁷⁵

Already a target, Lambronac'i was suspected by the eastern clergy and their sympathizers of complicity in the death of Grigor V. He was isolated by Lewon and deprived of rights to the pontifical throne. In 1195, Lambronac'i wrote his famous "Epistle to Lewon" (*T'utt' ar Lewon*).⁷⁶ The letter, which is in the form of an apology, is a direct attack on the mentality and culture of the easterners for their extreme conservatism and narrow mindedness. He explained that he was neither a heretic nor a rebel, as the easterners considered him. He said that while they thought that he was breaking established traditions—such as celebrating Mass with a special attire and an uncovered head—he was, in fact, restoring the ancient Armenian liturgical traditions. His adversaries were simply ignorant. The next and most important point was a vindication of his ecumenical and truly Christian relationship with the other Christians and peoples.⁷⁷ Furthermore, he observed that his ideas and reforms were shared by many in several monasteries and locations, such as Varagay Vank' and the churches of Vaspurakan.⁷⁸ Believing in free speech and open debate, he invited Tutēordi to a public debate as a courageous soldier. He concluded his letter with good wishes addressed to Lewon. The Armenian Church has rarely had a more genuine reformist and truly spiritual figure of the level of Lambronac'i, who was indeed the worthiest continuator of the legacy of Grigor Narekac'i.

It seems that Lewon's harsh treatment of Lambronac'i was just to appease the easterners. In 1196, when a council was summoned at Țarșuș (in which the nine points were again rejected), a letter was written (probably by Lambronac'i and Grigor Apirat) and taken to Constantinople by a delegation headed by Lambronac'i. The mission

did not meet with success probably because of Byzantine's refusal of Armenian conditions for union. Great Prince Lewon was obviously not frustrated at the failure. He was really in favor of a Latin–Armenian union that would serve the project of the kingdom. Lambronac'i died on July 14, 1198, at the age of forty-four.

IV. The Theological–Philosophical Legacy of the Twelfth Century

The major figures of the Silver Age did not seem to share the fascination of Magistros in Greek philosophers, but they showed genuine concern with regard to practical issues and applications of theory rather than pure theorizing. They focused on social morality, civil laws, church relations, ecumenism, national sovereignty, and so on. Issues were concretized, and practical solutions were adopted much to the displeasure of the more dogmatic and conservative eastern clergy. However, basic legacies and principles were always maintained and declared at every occasion. As a consequence, early forms of pragmatism, ecumenism, tolerance, and a spirit of reform distinguished between Cilician intellectual culture and western Armenian culture. In view of these peculiarities, the philosophical legacy of the twelfth century can be drawn by derivation. Some of the main issues that constitute the main aspects of this legacy are discussed next:

- a. The relationship of matter and form, the dualism of the body and soul were approached in eclectic fashions. In the tradition of the fifth century, medieval Armenian authors divided reality into corporeal and intelligible.⁷⁹ Matter was not eternal, whereas spiritual–incorporeal entities such as God, angels, and the soul were. The more theologically oriented figures such as Šnorhali considered matter imperfect but not evil. According to Šnorhali, after its union with the soul, the body became a worthy vehicle for the manifestation of the spirit.⁸⁰ As in the past, and fully adopting the Eznikian legacy, all Armenian authors as well as Cilicians consistently rejected dualism of all types. As mentioned, a peculiar type of monism developed in Armenian intellectual culture and became the basis of Armenian Christology, concepts of evil, free will, and even the plastic arts. Even though the corporeal and incorporeal were seen as distinct types of reality, together they constituted a singularity, in which the body was passive while the soul/mind was active.⁸¹ Lambronac'i, however, observed that the body also was an active element that affected human action. It is much easier, he

said, to satisfy the physical needs than the spiritual ones, because while the former are innate and natural, the latter are acquired.⁸² The body could curb the spirit toward its passions.

- b. Philosophical “realism” and pragmatism—for most Cilician authors, spiritual and social balance, or in Platonic terms “justice,” could only be achieved through the balance between reason and passions. In the case of society, and always following the Platonic pattern, the “philosopher king” or the wise king should rule. In the Eznikian tradition, even though Lambronac’i, in turn, was a rationalist, he was skeptical about the extent of human intellectual powers. According to him, nature had its secrets, which the human mind cannot penetrate.⁸³ Similar to most medieval authors, Lambronac’i also separated the objects of knowledge into sensible and intelligible, yet he gave great importance to the role of sense perception in the activity of knowledge. He provided the classic example of the born-blind and the impossibility of the knowledge of the physical qualities of objects.⁸⁴

More than others in the twelfth century, Lambronac’i was more familiar with the Greek Classical theories of history and Thucydides, in particular. He believed that people acted in similar fashions under similar circumstances. Consequently, history repeated itself, even though chance played a very important role.⁸⁵ “Time” (*žamanak*) rules over everything, he said, and “there is a time for everything.” Time ruled even over the “commandments” (*patwirank’*) and not vice versa⁸⁶ Earlier on, when examining the conditions for the conversion of Armenian Sunworshippers (*Arewordik’*) into the Apostolic faith at Samosata, Šnorhali reduced the requirements to a minimum. He said that the objective of gaining the “prodigal” sons of the church had priority compared with legal formalities or ideological scruples. In his correspondence with eastern clergy, Grigor Tłay strongly defended the negotiations with the Greeks, because the gravity of the circumstances of the Armenians on Byzantine territories had more urgency than mere principles. Cilician history is full of similar examples, and a very strong case can be made in favor of Cilician pragmatism.

- c. Free will and autonomy were not only basic aspects of the Eznikian legacy but also logical consequences of what may be called a typically Cilician philosophy of life. The pragmatism of Cilician authors as well as people in politics granted the relativity of all things to the given circumstances. Lambronac’i said, “Neither sin is sin,

nor justice is justice" in the absolute sense. Everything derived its meaning in its concrete context and at a particular time and place. If someone confesses the truth at an improper time, he may commit the greatest sin.⁸⁷ He applied this approach to all social processes and the implementation of ideologies to concrete cases. According to him, different situations necessarily affected the ideological content and demands of decisions.⁸⁸ Similar views were expressed by most Cilician authors. Šnorhali identified fatalism with what he called Greek thought, and contrasted it with autonomy and free will.⁸⁹

As always, Lambronac'i took more radical positions. Going beyond the Eznikian concept of autonomy, he distinguished between "internal" and "external" (*nerk'in*, *artak'in*) wills.⁹⁰ The latter meant extenuating circumstances that imposed certain choices on the individual, and sometimes contrary to his "inner" will. This strange division of the will was probably an attempt to explain human action under compulsion, and Cilician politics at the time provided many such cases. In turn, this was just another aspect of Cilician pragmatism.

- d. The solutions for the problem of evil were almost direct applications of Eznikian principles. Šnorhali went even further when he excluded God altogether from all evils in the world. Causes should be investigated in human action, as all these authors insisted, and Lambronac'i wrongly accused Plato and Aristotle for not inquiring into the "causes."⁹¹ As just observed, these authors do not seem to have been directly familiar with Plato's and Aristotle's works and instead mistook at least some Neoplatonic doctrines as Platonic and/or Aristotelian, as did some Muslim philosophers at the time.
- e. The attributes and the existence of God were not issues that needed philosophical proofs, and no skepticism was ever expressed by any one of these authors. Šnorhali and Lambronac'i used a mixed version of the cosmological and teleological arguments for God's existence, namely, that order and design in the universe were proof of an intelligent and good "cause" and designer, or God.⁹² Other issues such as refusal of eternal life and heaven and hell were rejected on purely Biblical grounds.⁹³
- f. Social change and reform became very pressing issues in the Cilician circumstances. All five of these authors were preoccupied with social problems and the need for reform. According to Šnorhali,

Cilician society was divided into six classes: clergy, rulers, military, citizens (merchants and craftsmen), agricultural workers, and the women (*kanayk*).⁹⁴

As is always the case, the education and guidance of the public were the prerogatives of the church and clergy. Lambronac'i, however, concentrated more on the role and duties of the people in politics, because the well-being and destiny of the people depended on wise and good leadership. He discussed the qualities of a good leader and also the need for advisory bodies; at the same time, he warned against the monopoly and abuse of power.⁹⁵ According to him, "property" meant "power" (*inč'k'* and *už*); therefore, the cause of harm was sought in social and economical inequalities, passion for material possession, envy, and love of power.⁹⁶ He drew two factors that caused massive poverty and injustice in his time. The first was the ruthless exploitation of the rulers and the *mecatuns*, and the extreme poverty of the exploited as a consequence. The second was the absence of controls and laws that prevent these acts and assist the needy.⁹⁷ As early as in the twelfth century and coming from a nobleman and a cleric, this analysis was a rare and precious case of a very progressive social mind.

- g. Generally, Cilician authors moralized faith almost entirely, because self-centered and theoretical faith seemed to be socially futile. For them, religion and morality belonged to the same practical sphere. For Šnorhali, faith without actions and actions without faith were dead. "Inactive faith is like a dead limb that cannot contribute to the functions of the whole body, and it cannot empower the soul."⁹⁹ We find even more radical ideas in Grigor Tlay and Lambronac'i. Faith is an active and aggressive agent that is used whenever and however necessary, even as a weapon against enemies.¹⁰⁰ This idea was not new. The militancy of Armenian Christianity was a part of the Classical legacy in which the episode of Vardananc' became iconic. Furthermore, in the case of Byzantines, the Crusaders and the Muslims in the midst of which Cilicia was, faith was very much a part of both mundane culture and politics. Lambronac'i gave religion a social role to fight social evils. "Virtue is not fulfilled by knowledge but by action," he said bluntly.¹⁰¹ In sum, the truth of religious principles and their justifiability lay in their practical applications. According to Lambronac'i, not even God could reach the assistance of the needy. It was the duty of the institutions and people in power to take care of them.¹⁰² According to him, faith is

similar to a skilled farmer who cleans the land of harmful weeds.¹⁰³ More than the others, Lambronac'i was a more direct and outspoken person. He was very radical in his criticism of social practices and the need for improvement and change. He asked,

Which is true, to keep silent and appear to be deaf and dumb . . . at the sight of deficiencies and failures, or to strip and expose them?¹⁰⁴

He rejected the mindless rejection of all things "foreign" and the unjustified praise of all "things Armenian." He advised to do the contrary: to turn attention to one's own shortcomings and defects and adopt the superior elements in the foreign cultures and peoples, and more importantly, he advocated the brotherhood of all the peoples and the avoidance of futile hostilities.¹⁰⁵ His "*Atenabanut'iwn*" and "Epistle to Lewon" were written in this spirit and are indeed very rare examples of medieval humanistic and ecumenical ideas. The correspondence of Grigor III, Šnorhali, and Grigor IV Tłay reflected identical ideas about the fraternity of all peoples and the unity of Christ's Church. The differences between the eastern and western Armenian positions and cultures, the disputes that led to the 1441 movement, are dealt by this author in another work.¹⁰⁶

- h. Cilician ecumenism—Scholars differ in their analyses of the Cilician condition, but as far as the clergy was concerned, it is clear that the traditional patterns of monasticism receded, and there developed a more comprehensive attitude toward and involvement in all aspects of life.¹⁰⁷ With regard to the details of liturgy and customs, Šnorhali thought that they "add nothing to or reduce anything from faith."¹⁰⁸ His predecessor Grigor III and successor Grigor IV expressed similar views in the context of church union debates. Cilician religious tolerance and ecumenism were based on these attitudes. For Lambronac'i, the meaning of Holy Mass was one, and liturgical customs were only secondary and insignificant. Holy Mass should enhance the sublimation of men and give spiritual peace to all mankind, irrespective of whatever language it is celebrated in.¹⁰⁹ He often ridiculed those who claimed to love peace but created conflict and stirred hostilities over mere words or practices. Šnorhali criticized the political motives of religious disputes between churches and the disputes within the Armenian Church itself.

Catholicos Grigor Tlay found himself in the midst of internal and regional disputes. The Church had to make sure that literature and faith served practical ends. Lambronac'i explained that there were two authorities, secular and religious, and both were equally important for society.¹¹⁰ He said that if bandits attacked a certain location, the role of a secular authority was to chase them away and take care of the people in their immediate needs. The role of the church; he continued, was to take care of the moral-social problems caused by such assaults.¹¹¹

- i. The *Diakonia* or the social service of the church became a part of the role of the Cilician Church. The times were reminiscent of Bishop Yakobos of Hark', who was accused of heresy or T'ondrakism during the first years of the eleventh century, judged, and persecuted as a result.¹¹² Lambronac'i was, in turn, accused of "heresy" by the easterners, because he harshly scandalized the unbecoming lifestyle and greed of the clergy. He said that many in Cilicia also exploited their position to accumulate wealth and behaved similar to feudal lords. He also felt that not everyone should be allowed to choose a religious career. He declared that the uneducated and the vicious should be prevented from entering the church, and a tradition of hereditary positions should be eradicated.¹¹³ Almost two centuries earlier, Bishop Yakobos of Hark' was branded with the fox sign of heretics when he said precisely the same things. Just as the latter was a dissident and a reformist, so were Narekac'i and Lambronac'i; hence, the singularity of Armenian dissidence. It is not difficult to see why this giant of the twelfth century was so unpopular in his own time, and still not properly studied.
- j. The relationship between the "national" and the "international" was first brought up and conceptualized during the twelfth century in Cilicia because of its unique political-cultural position and circumstances. Lambronac'i criticized those who categorized peoples into "good" and "bad." Obviously in favor of cosmopolitan attitudes, he condemned hostility that was purely based on race. In his "Epistle to Lewon," he wrote,

In my view, the Armenian is the same as the Latin, the Latin the same as the Greek, the Greek the same as the Egyptian [i.e., Muslim], and the Egyptian the same as the [Christian] Syrian [*asori*]. If I was the advocate of one nation [as it was expected of him by the eastern clergy], how would I be able to communicate with the others? I do not even discriminate against those who are [known to

be] enemies. I only gain of these [tolerant] attitudes [toward other peoples and faiths].¹¹⁴

V. New Thinkers: Society, Philosophy, and Science—Aygekc'i, Rabuni, and Herac'i

Typically Cilician ways of looking at reality and reacting to various circumstances were conceptualized in secular literature during the twelfth as well as the thirteenth centuries. Among many, figures such as Aygekc'i, Rabuni, and Herac'i were secular thinkers whom only Cilician conditions could generate. Indirectly constrained by religious and political concerns, each in his own field, a chronicler, a philosopher, and a physician, produced a new outlook and laid the foundations of physical and social sciences.

Vardan Aygekc'i (c. 1185–1230) was born in the Cilician town of Delük just northwest of Aynṭab and educated at the Monastery of Ark'akalin. In 1210, after being ordained as vardapet, he settled in Aygek and was known as Aygekc'i. He is the author of *Armat Hawatoy* (Foundation of Faith), which was written in 1205 and is an anti-Chalcedonian treatise that survived in several copies.¹¹⁵ He also has around twenty-two homilies in which he made ample use of parables, mainly of a secular and satirical nature. At the time, a cycle of about sixty of Ezop's parables and others from eastern and oriental sources were in circulation. In addition, people liked legends and jokes of various colors. During the seventeenth century, a large collection of these evolved into what is known as the Vardanian Cycle of parables. Aygekc'i is the author of some but surely not the entire collection. In 1668, this collection was first printed in Amsterdam by Oskan Erewanc'i and was titled *Aṭwēsagirk'* (Book of the Fox).¹¹⁶

The parables were gradually secularized, and the language drew closer to Middle Armenian. Otherwise, the language of Aygekc'i is a polished vernacular that is lively, humorous, and accessible. Social and class relations and the virtues–vices of all social types constitute the backbone of most of the parables. The motif he uses in most cases is contrasting: village and city, rich and poor, vicious and virtuous, smart and dumb, and so on. Respect for the clergy is minimal, and the vices of the rich and powerful are scandalized. The church and clergy seem to have lost their moral credibility and leading position, the mundane and physical needs of the poor have gained urgency, and the spiritual needs have turned secondary.

Mxit'ar Goš (1130–1213) was born in Ganjak (according to Kirakos Ganjakec'i). As a young man, he made a journey to Cilicia, and even though he already was a vardapet, he concealed this fact and studied at the Black Monastery (or *Sew Vank'*). He was ordained a second time, returned to Armenia, and settled in the Monastery of Getik in the province of Kayēn. In 1191, after this monastery had been destroyed by an earthquake, he established a new monastery in Nor Getik, which after his death came to be known as Gošavank'. He must have been a prominent figure, as he was invited to an important national council at Ani that was summoned by Ivanē Zak'arean, lord of Siwnik'. Goš was famous for his parables (around 190) and, more importantly, for his *Datastanagirk'* or *Girk' Datastani* (Book of Judgment).¹¹⁷ Written in 1184 and the first in its kind in Armenian literature, the *Datastanagirk'* was the result of extensive research conducted on Biblical ethics, Armenian Church canons, standardized local practice, Islamic Law (*Shari'ah*), and other systems. It became a reference and in Cilicia, the Constable and historian Smbat used the *Datastanagirk'* when he was preparing his *Yalags Datastanac' T'agawori* (Concerning Royal Judicial Laws). Gradually, it was also used in Poland, Russia, and elsewhere by Armenian communities that had a degree of internal autonomy.¹¹⁸

A comparison may be made here between the social philosophies of the Cilicians and the parables of Mxit'ar Goš in the east. Similar to Aygekc'i, Goš also was a man of the church who saw himself as a moral teacher. However, these two figures stood in almost opposite positions in certain social matters. Unconditional obedience of the lower classes and inferior people to the higher classes and people and the latter to God is a primary virtue for Goš, whereas Aygekc'i concentrated on the dark side of this "biblicized relationship." Fairness to the human being and respect for basic rights had priority for Aygekc'i. Consequently, although fear of authority was a restraining factor for Goš, Aygekc'i attacked the instrument of fear and the exploitation of power. For the former, fear served as a positive factor, whereas for the latter, it was an abuse. Aygekc'i tried hard to show that even though, in principle, the class/individual in power should treat the lower class justly, common practice proved the contrary. Goš advised the powerful to be just, because injustice may help the exploited to unite against them. He narrated the story of a bear who invaded an ant-hill but had to withdraw because of the collective counterattack of the

ants. The moral individual for Goš was, therefore, an “enlightened egoist” at best. In the eastern parables, as narrated by Goš at least, the social hierarchy was taken for granted as something ratified by divine authority. Obedience connected the lower to the higher social classes and maintained social order. In Cilician parables, virtue was almost secularized, and society was presented as being in dire need for a new system of relations and rights. The nobility and clergy in the east could not have been more oppressive than in Cilicia, but no critical attitudes surfaced in the eastern parables. Here lay the differences between the intellectual cultures of the clergy in Armenia proper and Cilicia.

VI. New Science

Mxit'ar Herac'i, a contemporary of Catholicos Grigor IV Tłay (last quarter of the twelfth century), was a physician, philosopher, and lover of arts. By the advice of the catholicos, he wrote the first Armenian medical manual, *Ĵermanc' Mxit'arut'iwn* (Remedy for Illnesses). As a thinker, he closely followed in the footsteps of Magistros and Sarkawag in secularizing knowledge and sciences. His book was a collection of accumulated medical knowledge available in Near Eastern urban centers at the time.¹¹⁹ The philosophical views of Herac'i are quite interesting. He believed that every action or idea should be verified by experimentation,¹²⁰ and questioned Aristotelian teleology, according to which everything that happens or exists had a definite, useful, and traceable purpose. Illnesses may occur by a variety of causes, he said, and symptoms should be treated by proper means.¹²¹ In his view, man was an organic unity in which every element or organ was mutually affective and affected, as, in turn, the organism was with the environment.¹²²

Herac'i was one of the most powerful voices in favor of introducing physical sciences into education alongside theology. Indeed, during the thirteenth century, medical schools (*bžškanoc'*) opened in Cilicia, and a certain Grigoris was mentioned as an authority in this field in that context. Grigoris was the author of *K'nnut'iwn Bnut'ean Mardoy ew norin C'awoc'* (Study/Examination of the Nature of Man and his Ailments).¹²³ Grigoris believed that qualitative and quantitative changes caused a disruption of balance in the body and led to diseases. He also spoke of the relationship between the organism and the environment, as well as the internal unity and harmony of the organism itself, which, according to him, was governed by the “head” (or reason).¹²⁴

VI. New Philosophy: Armenian “Nominalism”—Rabuni in Cilicia and Orotneç'i in the East

The basic Aristotelian orientation of eleventh-century authors such as Magistros and Sarkawag, the revolutionary and explosive literature of Narekac'i, and the pragmatism and liberalism of the twelfth-century Cilicians prepared the soil for a peculiar sort of Armenian nominalism in both Cilicia and Armenia proper. In Cilicia, this nominalism marked a change of perspective at all levels. Just as theology, philosophy, and sciences reflected this new outlook, so did poetry and painting express a new man and a new relationship with the world. The simplest way to understand Armenian nominalism is to focus on the relationship between the universals (or generals) and particulars (or individuals).¹²⁵

As an intellectual phenomenon of the twelfth century, European nominalism marked a transition from medieval to modern culture and mentality. Nominalists refuted the substantiality of the universals and/or their independent existence from individual objects. Contrary to Platonism, which restricted substantiality to universals, ideas, or forms, nominalism defined the universals as just names that had no substantiality or existence outside and without the individuals, and generally, the human mind. Beyond complicated metaphysical disputes, which occupied nominalists during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in Europe, culturally, the movement reflected a genuine concern in and appreciation of the mundane, the individual, and the physical environment.¹²⁶

In Cilician culture of the twelfth to fourteenth centuries, and the European Renaissance a century later, the exaltation of the individual and material was never at the expense of the universal—spiritual. On the contrary, the religious devotion of the forerunners of Cilician intellectual culture—Narekac'i, Magistros, and Sarkawag—was more intense and dynamic than that of their more conservative predecessors and contemporaries. Similar to Islamic culture, spiritual and physical realities coexisted and evolved in very dialectical patterns. Nominalism only established and ratified the individual entity as being metaphysically legitimate and significant in moral and aesthetic respects. Just as St. Anselm (1035–1109) defined substance as the individual and not universal, so did Narekac'i, Magistros, Sarkawag, Šnorhali, Lambronac'i, Grigor Tlay, Rabuni, Röslyn, and Picak. The individual as substance reflected its essence through its uniqueness. “Nominalism,” states Gabriëlean, “led Rabuni not only to the perception

of the reality of the individual, but to the idea of looking at it through its most basic aspects."¹²⁷

Vahram Rabuni, who lived in the second half of the thirteenth century, was the only philosopher of the Cilician period. He was the personal secretary of King Lewon III (1269–1289) and wrote the history of the Rubenid House in verse.¹²⁸ He also wrote a commentary on the Categories of Aristotle and another on the Isagoge of Porphyry.¹²⁹ He seems to have been generally familiar with European Scholasticism, which through him and the Latin Unitarians penetrated into the School of Tat'ew. He was also familiar with the Classical and Hellenistic philosophical traditions.

Rabuni argued against the Platonic theory of form and matter, and asserted the conceptual primacy of the genus (*ser*). Despite inconsistencies, he always granted the substantiality and primacy of the individual (*anhat*) as subject. According to him, neither the genus nor the species could come forth independent of or without the individual. The individual was a singularity and the basis of not only genus and species but also existence. Qualities were not substances, as they did not exist independently,¹³⁰ but only through the individual.¹³¹ This position led him to study the individual in the essential forms and aspects of its existence and the changes it went through. Rabuni left the questions of God's nature and His role in nature unresolved. It seems that after its creation, the universe was set in perpetual motion with no observable teleology. In other words, the course of nature did not necessarily lead to more perfection. Knowledge was completely based on sense perceptions, and nothing was innate. Therefore, the object of knowledge preceded the operation of knowledge, and knowledge reflected reality as it directly corresponded to it.¹³² In line with previous Armenian philosophers, Rabuni also gave great importance to the Categories of Aristotle, as tools of logic and sound knowledge.¹³³

A contemporary of Rabuni with a difference of two decades, Yovhan Orotneç'i (d. 1313) was from Tat'ew and had a similar but more developed position. During the Mongol period, Siwnik' enjoyed relative peace, and the monastic school of Tat'ew flourished. During these decades, the Uni'tors had intensified their campaign in the entire region, in both Cilicia and Armenia. First by Bartholomew, then by Dominican Yovhannēs K'rneç'i, Catholic propaganda expanded. However, the literature that was translated for missionary purposes introduced Armenian clergy into the sophisticated theologies of Anselm, Abelard, and Aquinas.¹³⁴

Unit'orist translations and Aquinian theology caused a leap in Armenian theological literature and philosophy. Among many other works, the *Summa Theologiae* and *Summa Contra Gentiles* of Aquinas were translated during the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Western philosophical thought and methods penetrated into these centers where Orotneč'i studied (at Glajor under Esayi Nč'ec'i, then at Tat'ew, where Grigor Tat'ewac'i [1346–1410] was his student). He also considered the individual as primary and substance. Nature had its laws and moved with no divine intervention.¹³⁵ Similar to Rabuni, Orotneč'i also distinguished theology from natural sciences, which dealt with the material world. The mind was a "clear mirror" (*mak'ur hayeli*) on which images were reflected.¹³⁶ Adopting the Aristotelian categories, he defined Being as that of the individual.¹³⁷

VIII. Cilician Aesthetics and New Arts: Poetry and Painting

A. Poetry and Narekac'i as a Major Influence; New Visions of God, Man, and Nature; Šarakans

Interest in poetry and a boom in verse writing during the twelfth century had their beginnings in the New Arts of the tenth to eleventh centuries and the unique culture of the Arcrunis in Rštunik', under the direct influence of Islamic culture. The new architecture of the tenth century gave masterpieces such as the Church of the Holy Cross, the palatine chapel and the Arcruni palace on the Island of Ałt'amar in Lake Van, and the architecture of Ani, the last capital of the Bagratunis. The age had one of its greatest figures and initiators of a new aesthetics in Narekac'i. As the founder of Armenian lyrical poetry, Narekac'i brought God, man, nature, and society into a single context and treated them as subjects and inspirations for his poetry.

His technique in writing verse was another contribution. This genre, however, echoed in Cilicia,¹³⁸ where the spiritual song or the *šarakan* saw its second golden age. *Tał* (song) was a current term used throughout, but it was Narekac'i who, probably for the first time, used the word "erg," which is a more "musical" synonym. Three of his "*gani*"s (or treasure in Armenian, from Arabic *kanz*) dedicated to the Holy Spirit, the Holy Church, and the Holy Cross were akrosticoi; the first letters of each line read "*Grigori Erg*" (Song of Grigor). This was a novelty in many ways. It meant that even though the subject was religious, the poem was still a personal song in which the poet was proudly presenting himself as an individual with an individual song

on a religious subject. Only twenty-two of his *tals* have reached us. Since no original manuscripts were ever found, all opinions about this genre of literature remain to be verified. Thirteenth-century poet Frik, for example, did not use the word “*tal*” and called his poems *ban* or *word* (*xosk’*, spoken word). It seems that Narekac’i was the first who took the initiative to separate literature from liturgy.¹³⁹ The style and language of his ergs were different from the more liturgical pieces. They were simple; their imagery and vocabulary were popular, sometimes idiomatic, and more colorful; and above all, they were very explicitly musical and rhythmical in the folk style of pagan songs. Unquestionably, Narekac’i founded a new art of literature, which reflected an acute awareness of and sensibility toward lived reality, events of the day, nature, and people. For example, he talked about the great earthquake that damaged the Cathedral of Hagia Sophia in 989 in Constantinople and circumstances of its reconstruction in 993/994, then connected this episode to more symbolic themes. The *Matean* was poetry in prose, after the Arabic *saja’*, and often taken for granted; the separation into lines was made by editors of publications in the twentieth century. He perfected various techniques of writing, such as the selection and repetition of certain vowels, consonants, syllables, words, phrases, and motifs. Almost two thousand words that were either his creations or not known to him and that had been used before him were introduced into the language by Narekac’i. Similar to the great Arab poets, he even made obvious grammatical distortions, omissions of essential sentence parts to create artistically more perfect and vibrant forms and sounds. Since poetry was a skill or a *techne* that was pivotal to Arab, Greek, as well as pagan social and cultural life, Narekac’i, in turn, was probably trying to restore this art of song and rhythm to its previous glory. Song and dance were also a part of the culture of the syncretistic sects. They were hamstrung to prevent them from dancing. A thousand years later, Daniel Varužan did the same in his Pagan Songs (*Het’anos Erger*) and was almost excommunicated by literary critics.¹⁴⁰

The Narekian poetic technique is a mixture of already existing folk poetry, pagan songs, the *šarakans*, and, most importantly, Arabic poetry. By the tenth century, there were two styles: the simple (*mekin ban*) and rhetorical (*cacuk ban*), as Šnorhali described them. Complicated rhyming techniques and measures, however, were borrowed from Arabic literature, as Abelean, Chobanian, and others also believe.¹⁴¹ According to Chobanian, alliterations, multistranded descriptions, narrations, and repetitions are such indications.¹⁴²

Before Arab domination, no such forms were known to have existed in Armenian literature. A simpler form called 'reply' or 'response' was adopted from Syriac, where the last word of a line was repeated at the beginning of the next; Narekac'i used this form.¹⁴³ We know that the Armenian *kafa* was the Arabic *qāfiah* (rhymed poetic line), which was adopted in Armenian literature as of the ninth century,¹⁴⁴ but the art of writing in verse as a new art form purely for self-expression and entertainment seems to have been officially inaugurated by Narekac'i and continued in Cilicia. He not only used Arabic forms but also invented new forms that described this new style as *čap'aberakank'*, or measured/rhymed writing as distinct from unrhymed prose. He described the *Matean*, his "Testament" and "Will," also as *nwag* or instrumental music. The book became a model and textbook for all poets as of the twelfth-century Cilicians and later on as well. As in pagan and Islamic poetry, physical nature was man's environment, which was luxurious, abundant, and luminous, also the contrary. It was God's creation that was matched by man's receptivity of it and participation in it. This was the legacy of Narekac'i, which caused a cultural transformation in Cilicia. Through Narekac'i and Šnorhali in his footsteps, the veneration of light (*lusapaštutiwn*)—a pagan, Zoroastrian, and typically Paulician—T'ondrakian practice—was "Christianized" and re-Armenized. This is the misunderstood T'ondrakism of Narekac'i, and the failure of Armenian cultural histories to understand this type of dissidence as a paradigm.

The synthesis of the higher and lower cultures, typical of the Northern European Renaissance, was achieved in the new arts of Cilicia. The urban population had its own ways of entertainment, and religion was not a particularly attractive diversion. Following the example of Narekac'i, Šnorhali, in particular, wrote simple and rhythmical poems and puzzles that were meant for popular entertainment.¹⁴⁵

The art of *šarakans* or spiritual song also benefited from the new and richer styles of writing poetry. All five Cilicians just mentioned contributed many *šarakans* to the liturgy.¹⁴⁶ Initially, the models for the Armenian *šarakans* were the pagan benedictions, the Psalms, Song of Songs, the Prophets, and Syriac spiritual songs.¹⁴⁷ The first collection of *šarakans*, or the *Šaraknoc'* was formed in the fifth century. The second period extended from the seventh to the eighth century, but the Second Golden Age was in Cilicia. After the thirteenth century, there was a slowdown until this genre came to a complete halt by the fifteenth century.¹⁴⁸ The Canons or the *kargs*

of the Armenian Church were finalized in the eighth century by Step'anos Siwnec'i. Specific spiritual songs were assigned to specific occasions; thus, the various rituals had their specific *šarakans*.¹⁴⁹ The *Šaraknoc'* was edited a few times, such as by Xosrov Anjewac'i in the tenth century, then Šnorhali in the twelfth. The spiritual song called *tať*, is not directly related to the liturgy. The *ganj* is a third type of spiritual song in prose that may also be sung outside the church.¹⁵⁰

B. The Cilician Art of Miniatures: Roslyn and Picak as "Nominalists"

Sacred art found its initial biblical justification in the legend of Christ's portrait by Luke. Otherwise, images were essentially illustrations for the Scriptures and writing for the illiterate. Christian arts were considered legitimate practice and reflected philosophical–theological ideas and practices. Many of the medieval authors were themselves poets, painters, and musicians. It is generally believed that already in the fifth century, there were miniatures in Armenia; however, the formal beginnings of manuscript illumination are traced to the schools of Kamsarakan and Tat'ew in the seventh century, but nothing has reached us of either center.

Manuscript illumination was a highly valued craft, a *techne* in the Greek sense, and involved knowledge and skill. Manuals and handbooks were available about the preparation of paints, parchment, paper, utensils, colors, design elements, guidelines, and iconographic data. These artists were called *catkols*, and *catkel* was the technical term for illuminating (from *zatic* or flower) or embellish. More than just an illustration and decoration, the image was a living symbol through which the meaning blossomed and revealed itself. Consequently, the visible-material image was a link to and a synthesis of a corporeal and an intelligible being, and, as such, it was significant. "The hidden is known through the manifest" (*yaydneok' zanerevuyt'n čanač'emk'*), said seventh-century author Vrt'anēs K'ert'oł in the context of his defense of the position of the Armenian Church with regard to the legitimacy of images.¹⁵¹

The significance of miniatures to our subject lies in the fact that the painted image was conditioned by three factors: the text that it illustrated, the lived reality or the intellectual atmosphere of the time and place, and, last but not least, the personal theology of the artist, in other words, his spiritual–intellectual relationship with Biblical truths and the church. Since miniatures were primarily a part of sacred arts,

their natural context was the problem of the legitimacy of images and the Christology of the Armenian Church, in particular. The foundational concept was the unity of divine and human natures in Christ. Never developed into a rigid dogma and being primarily "spiritual, devotional, and moral," as Catholicos Karekin II/I Sarkissian used to describe it,¹⁵² Armenian Christology readily became an inspirational tool and a proper environment for the arts.

The image of God-Man Christ was easy to accept by the common believer. "He is one and the same," said Yovhan Mandakuni, "united through the union of the flesh and the Godhead."¹⁵³ We are often advised to read in Luke 24/39: "Touch me and see, a spirit has no flesh . . . as you see me have." The historian of Armenian art realizes that the aesthetic of the spirit, or its sensibility, lay in the matter as well. Spirit and vision dissolved in the image. This was a philosophy of art that radically distinguished medieval Armenian art from Byzantine art. In the case of the latter, the image was dematerialized and deliberately made weightless.

From the beginning and as of the tenth century, in particular, Armenian spirituality absorbed and dissolved the link between the physical and the spiritual. Simultaneously physical and spiritual, the content of the sacred image granted it an immediacy of perception. Narekac'i opened both his mind and senses to receive the supernatural and the natural. The *Matean* erupted as a sacrificial conflagration of the soul; Šnorhali, in turn, addressed Christ as "vital fire," and asked Him to "pour down the flames of His love, burn away the impurities of the heart and grant him the light of divine knowledge."¹⁵⁴

A few works have survived from the Bagratuni and Arcruni territories in Širak and Vaspurakan. High levels of artistic expression and literature on iconography indicated a well-established tradition. The earliest surviving sample of this period is the Lazarian Institute Gospel dated 887, which is now at the Matenadaran in Erevan. The next and more important survivor is the Gospel of Queen Melkē, dated 902, which was donated to the Convent of the Holy Virgin in Varag. Melkē was the second wife of King Gagik Arcruni, the founder of the kingdom of Vaspurakan. Next, we have the Gospel of Ējmiacin (dated 989).¹⁵⁵

The Cilician art of miniatures was indeed an important part of the Golden Age of this art that extended from the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries.¹⁵⁶ It reached an unprecedented level in Cilicia as of

the second half of the twelfth century, following the rise of powerful and rich princes and the opening of monasteries, which provided the physical conditions for this art. Culturally, the aesthetic sensibilities of the poets, from Narekac'i to Šnorhali and Lambronac'i, and Cilician individualism and openness found their visual expressions in the art of illuminations. Cilician art was bound to be different from its contemporaries in both the north and the east.

Stylistically, Cilician painters elaborated the existing forms and produced exquisite margin ornamentations, xorans (altar-shaped motifs in manuscript illuminations), dividers, title pages, and other graphic motifs. Real and fantastic forms merged, and highly expressive human figures stood in heroic dimensions. Similar to Narekac'i, in blazing colors and elaborate design, the scope of these artists also was the whole scale of being, from supernatural people to the least significant elements of nature. Divine and human characters were comfortably placed on the stage of nature and/or social occasions, and the distance between the sacred and mundane was minimized, as though there was a kinship between them. Human society and the supernatural were often bridged by the figures of Christ and the Holy Virgin.

A note should be made at this point about Islamic influences on Armenian arts during the Age of Kingdoms and later on. It was at this time that architecture, design, and manuscripts began implementing Islamic geometric motifs and techniques. However, the naturalistic-organic forms that were typical of the earlier periods in Armenian arts were maintained and formally improved. There developed a very selective syncretism, which gave a sophistication and refinement to Armenian miniatures. Islamic influence on Armenian culture was never confined to the borrowing of geometric motifs and forms; rather, it reflected a more secular and richer outlook on mundane life and physical nature as objects of knowledge and sources of pleasure. This was the cultural atmosphere of the Near Eastern world where the Armenians lived. The extravagance of the 'Abbāsids, the development of urbanism and trade in Cilicia, and the libertine culture that developed in cosmopolitan centers marked a watershed in the region. Armenian culture was not just a part but also an important player on this stage. The Arcruni palace, the Church of the Holy Cross at Alt'amar, and the poetry of Narekac'i were the earliest indications of a change in both outlook and the culture. The Cilician painters had these models before them that served as starting points.

The conceptual and humanitarian content of the works of Țoslyn and Picak, the two best-known illuminators in Cilicia, should be studied against the background of Cilician social–intellectual culture at the time. The prosperity of the country, the extraordinary wealth of both the state and the church, the newly formed urban classes and crafts, and contacts with foreigners, in addition to the local Greeks, Arabs, Turks, and Syrian Christians, gave the illuminators the perfect physical milieu for depicting their subjects. Using already existing forms in Armenian miniatures, the Cilician artists took the mundane to a higher level and merged it into both the spiritual and the supernatural. Just as Narekac'i drew the human and divine closer through his direct address to God, as Rabuni gave the individual priority, so did the artists in painting, each in his own way. Each presented human beings in accordance with their own vision of them in the given circumstances, hence, the individualism of Cilician artists.

T'oros Țoslyn may have had Scottish ancestors, judging from his name. On the other hand, he may also have wanted to seem European. Otherwise, information on his life is very scarce. He must have been active between 1250 and 1275. His earliest work is dated 1256, and most of his works are found in the Țašoc' commissioned by King Het'um II in 1286. There are a few other works of the late 1280s. He is one of the eight artists of the Bible of Eight Painters, in which there are works of Picak as well. Țoslyn presented the supernatural level of reality and people in human dimensions, and the divine marked the highest level of perfection that the human mind comprehended, through the imagination at least. The depiction of supernatural persons and episodes of the Bible were personalized and free from conventional formats. In turn, the various characters were particular yet still the manifestations of the universal. This was what Narekac'i did by raising his "humble" and "sinful" self to the universal level of all humanity and conversing with God at that level. Here also lay the nominalism of the Cilicians and venture into new styles. This is why Narekac'i was first discovered and appreciated in Cilicia and not in the Monastery of Narek in Vaspurakan. Instead of applying basic medieval dualism, these artists raised physical and mundane reality to a level where it merged with the supernatural in a coherent whole, through which beauty shone as an essential aspect of divine creation. About eight centuries earlier, Eznik believed that beauty was granted by God and moral good was a benefit which right human action produced for the improvement of human beings.¹⁵⁷

The Narekian depiction of the Holy Virgin in his poems as a local Arcruni princess was the aesthetic prototype of this new direction that found its supporters in Cilicia after more than a hundred and fifty years. However, elsewhere, in many parts of Armenia, this was not the case; the forms were always schematized, even though the folkloric was very much present in the miniatures of Vaspurakan, the depiction still remained schematic. Despite the perfection and flexibility of the forms and the use of mundane elements, the Bible of Muḥni, in turn, was a literal rendition of the text, and, as such, its illuminations were only imitations of and secondary to the universals and the ideals. Later on, Ṛoslyn and Bicak took mundane elements that were already used in the miniatures, and reshaped them into artistically perfect forms, thus making them universal. This was the core of their nominalistic revolution.

In the works by Ṛoslyn and Picak (to some extent), the seemingly trivial physical details became integral parts of the whole, not less important than the more essential. As the Flemish painters painted the smallest crevices on the walls of the most modest room where the Enunciation took place, similarly, but much earlier, Narekac'i used many lines to describe, for example, the color of the two bulls that drew the chariot of Christ, or the jewelry of the Virgin. In Cilician illustrations, trees, caves, springs, fish, birds, and characters—ordinary and holy—functioned as compositional elements of a single theme. Physical nature and objects constituted the space that God and men inhabited. Time, in turn, was both real and eternal and helped in unfolding events of all sorts. This merging of the eternal and temporal, physical and spiritual allowed a unique freedom to both the artist and the poet. Ṛoslyn used the entire surface of the parchment and extended his picture beyond the frames into free and empty space.

Between 1319 and 1353, Sargis Picak worked, and belonged to the School of Yovhannēs Ark'aefbayr, which was one of the four Cilician schools of manuscripts. The other three schools were already closed in his time. It seems that initially he learned the art from his father, Grigor K'ahanay (priest). In an environment that was under perpetual destruction and attacks, Picak became more idealistic and cautious and sometimes geometric in his compositions. He lived during the Mamlūk invasions, when all the institutions were in erosion and barely managed to maintain some of the past luxury. Compared with Ṛoslyn, there is definitely less luxury and less audacity in Picak's works, but formally,

they are as perfect as those of the latter. It is difficult to agree with Xaç'ikean's remark that the art of Picak was an aspect of the general decadence of the country at the time.¹⁵⁸

After the fall of the kingdom in Cilicia in 1375, the art of miniatures was limited to a few locations and depended on modest resources. Cilician circumstances were not repeated anywhere else, and the art of Röslyn and Picak were fixed as models and references. In New Julfa, and during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when Armenian painters started appearing, the aesthetic legacy of these Cilician painters was revitalized and translated into new forms and meanings. Otherwise, as of the twelfth century, the intellectual legacy of Cilicia laid the foundations and provided the paradigms for the Armenian diasporic experience for the coming centuries amid different cultures and peoples. As mentioned as having developed between the east and the west, the Cilician legacy—such as pragmatism, ecumenism, realism, spirituality, openness, tolerance, and aesthetics—became the matrix for Western as well as Eastern Armenian intellectual and political cultures. Even though circumstances did not allow the evolution of Cilician intellectual culture into a veritable Armenian Renaissance, very significant steps were taken toward a new and broader phase in the Armenian experience, and new paths were drawn for the continuity of the people and their culture.¹⁵⁹

Notes

1. Der Nersessian, "Kingdom of Cilician Armenia," 630–59, 651.
2. Narekac'i was born around 950–951. He lost his mother at a very early age (he talks about his deprivation of motherly care in Book 51 of the *Matean*). After his wife's death, his father, Xosrow, put him and his elder brother Yovhannēs in the care of their mother's uncle, Anania Narekac'i, the abbot of the monastery and one of the important yet controversial scholars of the time. Xosrov became bishop of Anjeweac' during the incumbency of Cathòlicos Anania Mokac'i. Similar to the latter, he disagreed with the clergy on many issues. Anania and Xosrov became famous not only for their scholarship but also for their critical attitudes. Both of them and Grigor were named *cayt'* or unbeliever, skeptic, Chalcedonian, and heretic. In 977, at the age of 26–27, Grigor was ordained priest and after Anania's death, he became the leading figure of the monastery, without ever being promoted to a higher rank. He died on February 27, 1003, and his tomb is said to be on the east side of the Church of St. Sanduxt of the Monastery of Narek. Later on, a chapel was built there, and it became a pilgrimage site. In 1867, a marble tombstone was erected. Earlier on, in 1021, when Senekerim Arcruni handed over the kingdom to the Greeks and moved with his people to Sivās in the north, some of Grigor's remains were said to have been taken along and buried in another tomb in a village named

Narekay Giwt or Village of Narek near Akn and Tephrike. It is said that Narekac'i has a third tomb in the village of Nar in Rštunik', Vaspurakan, near his father's grave. About two kilometers northwest of the Monastery of Narek (about five kilometers south of the Lake Van), there is a cave overlooking the lake and the mountains. It is said to be Grigor's personal sanctuary. The works that reached us are "An Interpretation of Solomon's 'Song of Songs,'" "Epistle to the Abbot of the Monastery of Kčaw in refutation of T'ondrakian beliefs," Five Speeches (*čark'*), and Odes (*nerbotakank'*); three ganjs (religious poem-song) and seven sermons (k'aroz); about twenty-two tašs or songs/poems; and *Matean Olbergut'ean Grigori Narekay Vanic' Vanakani* (1000–1003), his forty-first work. Many of Narekac'i's works started being published in Istanbul in the nineteenth century. In 1840, his first complete works—*Matenagrut'iwnk'*—appeared in Venice. With the exception of a few poems, the literature of Narekac'i was almost inaccessible even to the literate, yet popular admiration amounted to his worship as a saint during the middle Ages. The popular Narekiana is a corpus of about twenty-eight legends, in both verse and prose written as of the thirteenth century, after his popularization in Cilicia. This legendary Grigor is a student of Elišē (a fifth-century historian of the Vardananc'); he is a miracle worker, a shepherd, a laborer, a gardener, and an assistant to the needy and the poor; he resurrects the dead (both humans and animals); he is a handicap who has a vision of Christ; he is a saintly figure to whom the Holy Virgin appears; and so on. Seldom a monastic, the "popular" Narekac'i is always one of the common people of Vaspurakan and Lake Van.

3. See Połos Xač'atrean, *Grigor Narekac'in ew Hay Mijnadarean Arjakē* [Grigor Narekaci and Medieval Armenian Prose], (Ėjmiacin: 1996), 21.
4. T'oros T'oramanean, *Haykakan Čartarapetut'iwn, Collected Works 1* [Armenian Architecture, Collected Worksm Vol. I], (Erevan: 1952), 92.
5. See T'ovma Arcruni, *Patmut'iwn Tann Arcruneac'* [History of the Arcruni House], (Tbilisi: N. Ałanean Press, 1917), 476–77.
6. Jean Méguérian, "Introduction," to *Gregoire de Narek Le Livre des Prières*, trans. Isahag Keshishian (Paris: Les Éditions de Cerf, 1961), 7–47, 13.
7. Ibid., 15.
8. See Marius Canard, "Les Hamdanites et l'Arménie," *Annales d'Études Orientales de la Faculté des Lettres de l'Université d'Alger* VII (1948): 79–94. Also, Marius Canard, "Histoire de la Dynastie des Hamdanites de Jazīra et de Syrie," *Annales d'Études Orientales* I (1961).
9. He wrote the poem on the Resurrection "*Taš Yarut'ean*," in *Grigor Narekac'i, Matean Olbergut'ean ew ayl Erkasirut'iwnk'—Millennial Publication* [Book of Lamentation and Other Works] (Antelias: Catholicosate Publications, 2003), 673. "*Sēr yařawõtē, sēr yařawõtē / Čemeal ier anjuk cagmamb / Cagmann arewelk' / Anun ayn arusekin.*"
10. Matean, Book 50/3, 218:

It was for this road of no return that I left this book,
It is my will [*ktak*] to the readers,
Let it be a personal vehicle for daily confession,
Let it be a perpetual voice before you, O Omnipotent God,

Whose image is upon us and whose word is in our soul . . .

Let everyone plead to you through my voice . . . (*Matean*, Book 54/4, 237–38)

If great sorrows overwhelm someone and the danger of death surrounds him, let him find redemption through this book. (Book 3/3, 24)

Heal those who read this book with a pure heart, purify them of their guilt . . . release them of their sins . . ., (Book 3/3, 23)

11. Grigor Pahlawuni Magistros claimed to have been a descendent of Grigor Lusavorič', but otherwise, the Pahlawunis were a very prominent and educated family among the Armenian nobility.
12. Méguérian, "Introduction," 15–16.
13. K. Č'alyan, *Hayoc' P'ilisop'ayut'ean Patmut'iwn* [History of Armenian Philosophy] (Erevan: Haykakan SSH GA Publications, 1975), 369.
14. Magistros, *Epistles*, 71.
15. Č'alyan, *History*, 370.
16. Magistros, *Epistles*, 8, 14.
17. Č'alyan, *History*, 371–72.
18. *Ibid.*, 373.
19. *Ibid.*
20. Méguérian, *Introduction*, 16.
21. H. G. Gabriëlean, *Hay P'ilisop'ayut'ean Patmut'iwn* [History of Armenian Philosophy] (Erevan: Mitk' Publications, 1976), 155.
22. Č'alyan, *History*, 377.
23. Mat. Ms. # 2595, fol. 242a.
24. Gabriëlean, *History*, 150–51.
25. A. G. Abrahamian, *Yovhannēs Imastasiri Matenagrut'iwnē* [The Works of Yovhannēs Imastasēr] (Erevan: Erevan State University Publications, 1956), 316.
26. *Ibid.*, 306.
27. Gabriëlean, *History*, 153–54.
28. Č'alyan, *History*, 377.
29. See Dadoyan, "The Chronicle of Michael the Syrian and the Armenian Version (1248): A Textual Comparison," *Hask Armenological Yearbook X* (2003–2006): 257–75. This is a textual comparison between the 1899 edition of the *Chronicle* of Mor Michael Patriarch of Antioch (1126–1199) by J.-B. Chabot, and the 1871 Jerusalem publication of the Armenian version from the 1248 ms. of Aknef.
30. *Armenian Encyclopedia*, vol. I (Erevan: Haykakan SSH GA, 1974), 222–23.
31. Ghevont Alishan, *Hayapatum* [History of Armenians] (Venice: St. Lazar, 1901), 98.
32. *Ibid.*
33. *Zamanakagrut'iwn Tia'n Mikhaeli Asorwoy Patriark'i* [Chronicle of Patriarch Michael the Syria] (Jerusalem: St. Yakob, 1871), "The Introduction," XII.
34. The first is the following in literal translation by this author:

In the Armenian year 678 [1229] was completed this history of Mar Michael, the patriarch of the Syrians. It is a selection (*caṭkak'at*) of events [that occurred] since the creation of Adam, the flood, Noah and his Ark, the kings of the Greeks and the Persians, the rise of the Arab Empire, the Turkish Sultans and their oppression of many nations and races. Since the beginning, 6430 years have elapsed and it is now the year 1248. This history starts from the time of Adam and it is now the year 1248. Many sections were read but only that which was useful and pleasant is summarized here. While many histories confine themselves to their own nation or a single dynasty and a short period, the present work is a rigorous initiative which strikes its roots firmly in the Scriptures and gathers information on the kingdoms of the world and their stories. Keeping an eye on all times, the Chronicle offers only that which is worth mentioning and remembering. We omitted much that was unfamiliar to us or simply doubtful. In the case of repetitions, we abbreviated the discussion, always remaining in line with the style and the content of the text. Do not be surprised at what you find strange and false in these accounts, because more than others in wisdom and arts, the Syrians were always in the proximity of the Hebrews in their habitat, race and language. [Furthermore] They [Syrians] were also higher in their culture and learning than the Chaldeans [of Mesopotamia] who [nevertheless] were the initiators of language and writing. In addition, Lord Michael is more revered and loved than the historians of the Greeks, Egyptians, Hebrews, Romans, and Syrians from whose books he gathered his information. Let his memory be blessed in the Church and let God bestow upon his soul the rewards that he deserves. In the timelessness of God, it is now the year 1248 and 697 of the Armenian calendar. This book was translated from Syriac by the order of His Holiness [catholicos] Kostandin [Barjrbērdc'i] at the 25th year of his tenure and the 25th year of the reign of King Het'um [Het'um I, 1226–1269/70] of the Armenians. May God glorify their souls and make them worthy of His kingdom, glory be to the Holy Trinity now and for all eternity.

The following is the second colophon, again by this author:

Manifold is divine grace upon mankind and God advises us to be constructive and studious for the glory of His name and the Church. He is good and omnipotent therefore 'he who is good performs good actions', and 'God is the source of all goodness'. The results of the Good are the Cross, the Church and the books which advise the pious and the wise to perform and love the Good, for they will be rewarded in life hereafter. Some build churches for angels to reside in and for men to repent. Some make crosses in pure gold and precious stones in honor and love of the crucified Jesus Christ, who brought peace upon the heavens and earth with the blood of his crucifixion. Some record the life of the martyrs to express their veneration and to gain grace before the justice of Christ. Others write on the conquests and the wars of kings and emperors, to assist men to remember these temporal kingdoms, also the eternal kingdom of our Lord Christ. I, humble abbot Step'anos of the Monastery of Akanc' devoted myself to the task of preparing the history of Lord

Mikhaël Patriarch of the Syrians of Antioch. This is a selection [of events] from the time of Adam to the birth of Christ and then to the year 678 of Armenians [that is 1129, obviously wrong]. He has written about the Tartars, or the nation of arrowmen [Mongols], who have been around for 48 years now. The Chronicle is intended to make the listeners understand the finite and transitory nature of life. Nothing is permanent and all that is created is destined to remain in this world, where everything is vainest of all vanities, as the Sage Solomon said seeing that life was deceitful, transitory and empty. I, the miserable scribe Grigor, beg you that as you read this universal history, to ask the Lord God to have pity on Father of Step'anos the head of the Holy Order of Akanc' and all [his] deceased [relatives]. May Christ have mercy upon Vardan the sexton [of the monastery] and his parents. May God have mercy upon all those who are at Akanc'; from the highest to the lowest of the servants of this sacred order. May Christ have mercy upon the priests Kostand and Sion who cleaned and prepared the parchment. Finally, may the mercy of God be upon me, the suffering scribe, who labored hard and wrote [despite] a weak body. . . . Also remember honorable Priest Yovhannēs, who copied the last books for I was too feeble and forgetful. Remember T'adēos, senior priest of the Monastery [Akanc'], who provided the manuscript. Glory be to our Lord Christ to eternity, Amēn.

35. G. H. Grigorean, *Hasarakakan-P'ilisop'ayakan Mitk'ë Haykakan Kilikiayum* [Social-Philosophical Thought in Armenian Cilicia] (Erevan: Haykakan SSH GA, 1979), 13.
36. See Dadoyan, "Hay Manrankarč'ut'ean Nominalistnerē T'oros Roslyn ew Sargis Picak" [The "Nominalists" of the Art of Armenian Miniatures], *Haigazian Armenological Review* IX (1981): 235–52.
37. See Dadoyan, *Yovhannēs Erzenkac'i: 'Views from the Writings of Islamic Philosophers' and Philosophical Treatises in the Light of their Islamic Sources* (Beirut: Technopress, 1991).
 - Dadoyan, "The Nāširi Futuwwa Literature and the Brotherhood Poetry of Yohannēs and Kostandin Erzenkac'i – Texts and Contexts," in *Redefining Christian Identity: Cultural Interaction in the Middle East since the Rise of Islam*, ed. J. J. Van Ginkel, H. L. Murre-Van Den Berg, and T. M. Van Lint (Leuven: Peeters, 2005), 237–64.
 - Dadoyan, "The Constitution of the Brotherhood of Erzinjān (1280): An Armenization of the Futuwwa Reform Project and Literature of Abbasid Caliph al-Nāšir li-dīn Allāh," *Revue des Études Arméniennes* 29 (2003–2004): 117–65.
38. In 1160–1163, after Ani, the Catholicosate was first established at T'awblur then, in 1065, at Camndaw in the Monastery of Sew Leṛ; in 1116, it then moved to Karmir Vank' in Kesūm under Goṭ Vasil, and then, in 1116, to Cowk' which was under Prince Vasil, another son of Prince Apirat, who was the eldest brother of Grigor and Nersēs. In 1150, it settled at Hromkla. In 1292, when the latter fell to the Mamlūks, Sis became the seat and remained this way until 1916. After a brief exile in Syria and Palestine, and a short return to Adana, Catholicos Sahak Xapayan came to Aleppo and remained there until 1930, when the Catholicosate finally settled in Antelias,

- north of Beirut in Lebanon. This was the seventh location after Ani. See Dadoyan, *The Armenian Catholicosate from Cilicia to Antelias* (Antelias Beirut: Catholicosate Publications, 2003).
39. These epistles are collected in Nersēs Šnorhali, *Ēndharakan T'ult'k'* [Encyclical Letters] (Jerusalem: Surb Yakob, 1871).
 40. Grigorean, *Social-Philosophical Thought*, 24.
 41. Smpad Saadetian, *Nersēs Lambronac'i* (Beirut Antelias: Catholicosate Publications, 1981), 52–54.
 42. Grigorean, *Social-Philosophical Thought*, 24.
 43. Ibid., 25–26. His works: *Namakani* [Letters], (Venice: St. Lazar, 1838); "*Grigor Tlayi Erku Namakē Grigor Tutēordun*" [The Two Letters of Grigor Tlay to Grigor Tutēordi], *Ararat* (1893): 238–53; "*Grigor Tutēordu patasxan namakē Grigor Tlayin*" [The Reply of Grigor Tutēordi to Grigor Tlay], *Ararat* (1893): 321–50; "The Letter of Catholicos Grigor III to Emperor Kiř Manuēl," *Ararat* (1893): 27–48.
 44. Saadetian, *Nersēs Lambronac'i*, 55.
 45. Grigorean, *Social-Philosophical Thought*, 28–29.
 46. Saadetian, *Nersēs Lambronac'i*, 63.
 47. Ibid., 64.
 48. Ibid., 65.
 49. Ibid., 67–68. See Grigor IV Tlay, *Namakani* [Letters] (Venice: St. Lazar, 1865).
 50. Aram I Catholicos Keshishian, *St. Nersēs the Gracious and Church Unity* (Antelias: Catholicosate Publications, 2010), 37–38.
 51. Nersēs Lambronac'i, Eulogy, in The Universal Encyclical of St. Nersēs the Gracious—Specifically: *Patčar xndroy miabanut'ean t'agaworin horomoc' Manuēli ew srboc' Katolikosac'n hayoc' Nersēsi ew Grigoris t'ult'kn zor grec'in ar mineans* [The Letters that Manuel, King of the Greeks and Holy Catholicoi of the Armenians, Nersēs and Grigoris Wrote to Each Other on the Question of Unity] (Jerusalem: Surb Yakob, 1871), 222.
 52. There is a bibliographical description in Arsen Łazikean. *A New Armenian Bibliography and Encyclopedia of Armenian Life*, 2 vols., vol. II. (Venice: St. Lazar, 1912), 238–51.
 53. The Greek text has been published with a parallel Latin translation as *Theoriani Orthodoxi Disputatio Cum Armeniorum Catholico*, ed. Minge, Patrologiae, vol. 133, 119–297. The Classical Armenian version with the Latin translation is in: Galanus, *Conciliationis*, vol. I, 241–32.
 54. It has three other publications:
 - Book known as *Universal Encyclical written by the Most Holy Pontiff of ours Lord Nersēs the Gracious* (St. Petersburg: 1788).
 - *Universal Encyclical Written by the most Blessed pontiff of ours, Lord Nersēs the Gracious*, ed. A. Narinian (Constantinople: 1825).
 - *Universal Encyclical of Saint Nersēs the Gracious* (Ējmiacin: 1865).
 55. Aram I Catholicos Keshishian, *St. Nersēs*, 49–50. The full title of the first profession of faith is: "*Gir hawatoy xostowanut'ean hayastaneayc' ekelec'woy greal i Nersisē ark' epikoposē yetbōrē tiarn Grigoris katutkosihayoc' i p'esai*

ik'naka t'agaworin Hromoc' Manuēli Alēk'si meci Prōtosiatōri, yoržam el yarewels ew ēr i Mamestia mayrak'atak'in kilikec'woc' i t'uakanut'ean hayoc' vec' hariwr čorek'tasan" [The profession of faith of the Armenian Church, written by Archbishop Nersēs, the brother of Lord Grigoris, Catholicos of the Armenians, at the request of honorable Alexios, the great Protostrator, son-in-law of Manuel, the autocrat King of the Greeks, while visiting the East and was in Mamistra, the Cilician metropolis, in the year six hundred fourteen or 1165].

56. Ibid., 51.
57. Ibid., 52–53.
58. *The Universal Encyclical* (Jerusalem: Surb Yakob, 1871), 107–9.
59. Aram I Catholicos Keshishian, *St. Nersēs*, 53.
60. Ibid., 54–55.
61. *Universal Encyclical*, 120–43.
62. Aram I Catholicos Keshishian, *St. Nersēs*, 56.
63. Karekin II/I Catholicos Sarkissian, *A Brief Introduction to Armenian Christian Literature* (London: Faith Press, 1960), 44.
64. Aram I Catholicos Keshishian, *St. Nersēs*, 57.
65. Ibid., 58.
66. Ibid., 60.
67. Ibid., 61.
68. Nersēs Lambronac'i: "Eulogy on the Life of Nersēs the Gracious with Historical Narratives," 217–28. The *Universal Encyclical* of St. Nersēs the Gracious—Specifically: *Patčar xndroy miabanut'ean t'agaworin hořomoc' Manuēli ew srboc' Kat'olikosac'n hayoc' Nersēsi ew Grigorisi t'utt'kn zor greč'in ar mineans*, 156–57.
69. Aram I Catholicos Keshishian, *St. Nersēs*, 68–69.
70. *Chronicle of Lord Mik'aēl, Patriarch of Syrians* (Jerusalem: Surb Yakob, 1871), 460–61.
71. For this correspondence see *Universal Encyclical*, 166–201.
72. *Universal Encyclical*, 328–29.
73. "Hayn mišt atatakē, Astuac im gohanam zk'ēn or č'ararēr zis hořomn, ew hořomn znuyn ban erkrordē t'ē oč' ararēr ziz hay," in Nersēs Lambronac'i, *Atenabanut'iwn* [Speech] (Venice: St. Lazar, 1865), 116.
74. Saadetian, *Nersēs Lambronac'i*, 78.
75. Ibid., 80–82.
76. Nersēs Lambronac'i, *T'utt'ar Lewon* [Epistle to Lewon], (Venice: St. Lazar, 1865), 207–48.
77. Ibid., 220.
78. See Saadetian, *Nersēs Lambronac'i*, 167.
79. Grigorean, *Social-Philosophical Thought*, 283–84.
80. Gabriēlean, *History of Armenian Philosophy*, 162.
81. Nersēs Šnorhali, *Enyclical Letters*, 97; Gabriēlean, *History*, 162; Lambronac'i, *Matenadaran Ms. # 1142*, fol. 148a; Grigorean, *Social-Philosophical Thought*, 49–50; Lambronac'i, *Matenadaran Ms. # 4694*, fol. 206a.
82. Lambronac'i, *Mat. Ms. # 4694*, fol. 206a.
83. Lambronac'i, *Mat. Ms. # 1142*, fol. 148a; Grigorean, *Social-Philosophical Thought*, 49–50.

84. Lambronac'i, *Mat. Ms. # 4694*, fol. 94b.
85. *Ibid.*, fol. 223a.
86. "Ew ayspēs tirē žamanakn patwiranac' ew oč' t'ē patwirann." 'Ew tes, zi ōrēnk' xalatut'eann oč' ē hanapaz ofjuneli, ayl ink'n carayē ėntrotut'ean žamanakin.' Lambronac'i, *Mat. Ms. # 4694*, fol. 218b. Also see Grigorean, *Social-Philosophical Thought*, 56.
87. Lambronac'i, *Mat. Ms. # 1142*, fol. 218b.
88. Grigorean, *Social-Philosophical Thought*, 58–59.
89. *Ibid.*, 64.
90. *Ibid.*, 65.
91. *Ibid.*, 41.
92. Nersēs Šnorhali, *Encyclical Letters*, 9; See Nersēs Lambronac'i, *Meditations Concerning the Canons of the Church*.
93. Šnorhali, *Encyclical Letters*, 264–65.
94. *Ibid.*, 68.
95. Lambronac'i, *Mat. Ms # 1142*, fols. 71a–71b.
96. *Ibid.*, fol. 225b.
97. Grigorean, *Social-Philosophical Thought*, 81.
98. Šnorhali, *Encyclical Letters*, 14.
99. *Ibid.*, 15.
100. Grigorean, *Social-Philosophical Thought*, 95.
101. "Ařak'int'iwn oč' k'ałc'ranay i giteloy, ayl i gorceloy." Lambronac'i, *Mat. Ms # 1142*, fol. 9a.
102. Grigorean, *Social-Philosophical Thought*, 82.
103. Lambronac'i, *Mat. Ms # 1142*, fol. 154b.
104. Lambronac'i, *Meditations Concerning the Canons of the Church*, 550.
105. Grigorean, *Social-Philosophical Thought*, 90.
106. See Dadoyan, *Armenian Catholicosate from Cilicia to Antelias*.
107. Grigorean, *Social-Philosophical Thought*, 96.
108. Šnorhali, *Encyclical Letters*, 133.
109. Lambronac'i, *Xorhrdacut'iwn i Surb Pataragi* [Meditation concerning the Holy Mass, as explained by Nersēs Lambronac'i], (Jerusalem: Surb Yakob, 1842), 118.
110. Grigorean, *Social-Philosophical Thought*, 100–101.
111. Lambronac'i, *Meditations Concerning the Canons of the Church*, 36.
112. See Aristakēs Lastivertc'i, *History* (trans., notes), V. Gēworgean (Erevan: 1971), 89–90; Dadoyan, *Fatimid Armenians*, 60.
113. Lambronac'i, "Inquiry into the Laws of Christ", in *Matenagrut'iwnk' Naxneac'*, 526.
114. Lambronac'i, "Epistle to Lewon", in *Matenagrut'iwnk' Naxneac'*, 220.
115. See Y. Anasean, *Vardan Aygekc'in ir norayayt Erkeri luysin tak* [Vardan Aygekc'i in the Light of his Newly Discovered Works] (Venice: St. Lazar, 1989).
116. Srбуhi Hayrapetean, *Hayoc' Hin ew Mijnadarean Grakanut'ean Patmut'iwn* [History of Ancient and Medieval Armenian Literature] (Beirut Antelias: Catholicosate Publications, 1988), 424–25. The English translation: Srбуhi Hayrapetean, *History of Armenian Literature* (Delmar, NY: Caravan Books, 1995).
117. *Ibid.*, 417.

118. Ibid., 418.
119. *Mxit'aray Bžškapeti Heracwoy ĩermanc' Mxit'arut'iwn* [Remedy for Illnesses of Mxit'ar Herac'i] (Venice: St. Lazar, 1832).
120. Gabriëlean, *History*, 156.
121. Mxit'ar Herac'i, *Remedy for Illnesses*, 15.
122. Ibid., 3.
123. Grigoris, *K'nnut'iwn Bnut'ean Mardoyew norin Cawoc'* [Study/Examination of the Nature of Man and his Ailments], ed. A. Kcoyan (Erevan: HSSR GA Publications, , 1962).
124. Ibid., 4.
125. See Dadoyan, "The Nominalists of the Art of Armenian Miniatures: T'oros Roslyn and Sargis Picak," *Haigazian Armenological Review* IX (1981): 235–52, 236.
126. Ibid., 236.
127. Gabriëlean, *History*, 176.
128. Vahram Rabuni, *Vahramay Rabunwoy Otanawor Patmut'iwn R'ubeneanc* [Vahram Rabuni's History of Rubenids in Verse] (Paris: K. Shahnazarian Press, 1859).
129. Č'aloyn, *History*, 390.
130. Vahram Rabuni, *Meknut'iwn Storogut'ean Aristoteli* [Interpretation of Aristotle's Categories], trans. G. H. Grigorean (Erevan: Haykakan SSH GA Publications, 1967), 261.
131. Ibid., 212–14.
132. Č'aloyn, *History*, 391; Gabriëlean, *History*, 177–78.
133. Gabriëlean, *History of Armenian Philosophy*, 179.
134. See Č'aloyn, *History*, 392–93.
135. Gabriëlean, *History of Armenian Philosophy*, 183.
136. Mat. Ms. # 3207, fols. 103–4.
137. Gabriëlean, *History of Armenian Philosophy*, 188–89.
138. Hayrapetean, *History*, 359.
139. M. Mkrean, *Grigor Narekac'i* (Erevan: Erevan State University Publications, 1955), 140–41.
140. See Dadoyan, "Daniel Varužan: Kensapaštakan Droydë ibrew Hakat'ëz Andrabaštut'ean," [Daniel Varužan: The Vitalistic Philosophy as an Antithesis to Transcendentalism], in *Ėjer Arewmtahay Mtacumën* [Pages from West Armenian Philosophical Thought] (Beirut: AGBU, 1984), 183–216.
141. M. Abelean, "Surb Grigor Narekac'i'" [Saint Grigor Narekac'i], *Azagrakan Handës* XXVI (1916): 85–136, 133.
142. Arshag Chobanian, *Arshag. Dëmkër* [Important Figures] (Paris: Hay Grakan Himnarkut'iwn, 1924), "Grigor Narekac'i," 20–21.
143. Abelean, "Surb Grigor Narekac'i," 134.
144. Mkrean, *Grigor Narekac'i*, 34–35.
145. Hayrapetean, *History*, 279.
146. There are eight types of *šarakans*: *örhnut'iwn, harc', mecuc'ë, Tër yerknic', mankunk', olormia, čaşunë, mičörëin, hambarjinë, erekoyean*.
147. Hayrapetean, *History*, 250.
148. Ibid., 250.
149. Ibid., 247.

150. Ibid., 246–47.
151. See Vrt'anēs K'ert'oī, "Yatags Batkeramartic" [Concerning the Iconoclasts], *Batma-Panasirakan Handēs* 2 (1981): 178–90.
152. See Karekin II/I Catholicos Sarkissian, *The Council of Chalcedon and the Armenian Church* (London: S.P.C.K., 1965).
153. Yovhan Mantaguni, *Jark'* [Homilies] (Venice: St. Lazar, 1860), 212–13.
154. Nersetis Glajensis, *Preces Sancti* (Venice: St. Lazar, 1884), 197.
155. This Gospel has four very elaborate scenes at its end: the Annunciation, Zak'arē, the Magi, and the Baptism. The Gospel of Kars, commissioned by King Gagik of Kars (1029–1064) is preserved at the Monastery of St. Yakob in Jerusalem. Two examples can be mentioned here in support of the observation about the scope of the subject matter of Armenian manuscript art: The first is a very interesting illustration of the "Temptation of Christ by the Devil"; see Onnig Avedissian, *Peintres et Sculpteurs Arméniens* (Cairo: Amis de la culture arménienne, 1959), 57, where the Devil is an unusually realistic nude young man, with classic proportions facing Christ. The next is a group portrait of the king, Queen Koranduxt, and their daughter Mariam (see Ibid., 54).
156. See Avedissian. Also for the illustrations: *Miniatures Arméniennes* [Haykakan Manrangarč'ut'iwn] (Int.) L. A. Dournovo (Erevan: Hayastan, 1969); *Ornaments of Armenian Manuscripts* (of the Matenadaran) (Erevan: 1978); *Armenian Miniatures- Vaspurakan* (Erevan: Hayastan, 1978).
157. Eznik Kořbac'i, *Etc Atandoc'*, 148.
158. Lewon S. Xaç'ikian, *XIV Dari Hayerēn Jeragrerī Yiřatakaranner* [Colophons of Armenian Manuscripts of the Fourteenth Century] (Erevan: Haykakan SSR GA, 1950), 283–84.
159. For Mongol–Chinese influences on the Cilician art of miniatures, see Dickran Kouymjian, "Chinese Elements in Armenian Miniature Painting in the Mongol Period," in *Études Arméniennes - In Memoriam Haig Berberian* (Lisbon: Gulbenkian Foundation, 1986), 415–68; Linda Komaroff. "Chinese Motifs in Thirteenth-Century Armenian Art: The Mongol Connection," in *Beyond the Legacy of Genghis Khan*, ed. Linda Komaroff (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 303–24.

Summary: The Arguments in Volume Two

The main argument of this book, as put forward in the Introduction of Volume One, is as follows: If historical Armenia as well as the modern republic have always been between central Asia Minor, the southern Caucasus, and the Islamic world, and if until a few decades ago, the Near/Middle East was the *oikoumenē* or habitat of most of the Armenians, their history also was naturally a part of the region and its peoples. I also observed that in this region the Armenian experience, in general, has been too diverse and complicated to respond to simplistic constructs around the idea of a persistent, heroic yet victimized nation. Indeed, despite claims, no constant line of what some call “Armenian ideology” can be traced or established, other than the one that is marketed by circulating both medieval and modern narratives. In fact, a certain politics of historical writing supported by a culture of authority has focused on certain episodes and recently on the Armenian Genocide (of 1915), in particular.

The themes introduced in Volume Two stand as proofs of large phases and, more importantly, peculiarities of Armenian involvement in the medieval Near East—both Islamic and Christian—that traditional histories have failed to notice, explain, or simply marginalize. This volume sometimes literally “excavates” paradigmatic cases of a lost Armenian phase or a “world,” so to speak, from the tenth to the twelfth centuries.

In general, this volume is central to the book in several respects. One of my major arguments in Chapter 1 on “*Bilād al-Shām* in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries and the Armenian Intermezzo” is that the two centuries from the 970s to the last quarter of the twelfth constituted a distinct phase in both Armenian and regional history. The record is almost entirely in Arab histories, as the reader will have realized. In other words, classifications of phases should be

reconsidered; otherwise, the most interesting phase of Armenian history will continue to remain in obscurity.

By the mid-eleventh century, the Armenian dynastic territories or the kingdoms had been annexed to Byzantium, but the point I make is that the loss of sovereignty—rather semi-autonomy—did not freeze Armenian military—political activity by both the “orthodox” and extra-establishment-heterodox factions. The contrary is true: New contexts and circumstances generated new and intriguing patterns of interaction that reached unprecedented levels. The region was undergoing radical changes, and Armenians of all backgrounds and concerns were directly impacted. The Armenian condition changed drastically. The period of two hundred years produced new paradigms in a vast amount of new historical material, which will inevitably upturn conventional criteria of puristic identity and/or ideology.

As far as the Armenians were concerned, these changes resulted in the creation of a new habitat in the heart of the Islamic world. Already as of the later tenth century, there were Armenian communities in the valley of the Orontes River, Cilicia, the Euphrates River, around the Tigris River, al-Jazīrah, Upper Mesopotamia, the entire al-Shām, Palestine, Egypt, and further west. In view of this expansion, so to speak, the link between the north and south, east and west, or between the different parts of the Armenian habitat should be made and has not been done. This can only be achieved by first a holistic approach and second by looking at both the habitat and the period as a singularity in Near Eastern and Armenian history. In other words, what I call the Paradigm of Habitat has central significance, both then and during later periods in Armenian history. The classic division between “Fatherland” and “Diaspora” is very simplistic and has no historical grounding.

There is the most interesting issue of social and class evolution during this period. The new lords of the Armenian communities and enclaves/powers in the midst of the Byzantines, Arabs, Turks, and soon the Crusaders did not come from the nobility but from military and heterodox backgrounds. In other words, the change of habitat and surely political and economic circumstances caused sudden changes in social and class evolution. Parallel to the weakening of the church and traditional nobility, new political cultures and manners of interaction with both the Muslims and the other Christians emerged. However, throughout, Armenian political life did not stagnate. On the contrary, there occurred a fragmentation and a breakdown of Armenian political—cultural energy into more dynamic

patterns and new institutions. Power was distributed, and the militant Paulician–T'ondrakian “outlaws” and “bandits” as well as the remnants of the cavalry or the freemen (azats) of the nobles had a good share.

Some of the least noticed aspects of this phase were the questions of legitimacy and identity. As extra-establishment and heterodox factions and figures acquired significant roles in Near Eastern politics, legitimacy became a relative matter, as pointed out throughout this text. Furthermore, dichotomies between orthodoxy and heresy blurred, because the institutions that defined these lines receded, and some were dismantled. New alliances were made with all sorts of Christian and Muslim sides. Transitions into other religious–political cultures were inevitable as well as beneficial. Alongside orthodox Armenians, there were Latin and Chalcedonian Armenians, just as there were Muslim and heterodox Armenians. Traditionally considered a paradigm of sorts and invested on, the question of Armenian identity in the context of these circumstances will confuse even the most dogmatic of scholars.

Another major development during these two centuries is what I call the Medieval Armenian Diaspora. It was a new condition that evolved and grew as a new and permanent social–political–cultural condition of Armenians at both the regional and, eventually, the international stages. As of this period and for the past millennium, the majority of Armenians do not live on the native land; they are practically natives/citizens of the locations they live in. Not only what is known as the six (or seven) Armenian *Vilayets* (provinces) in eastern Ottoman Turkey were/are a part of the new Armenian habitat, but also Cilicia, Syria, some of Mesopotamia, and Egypt as well. Many aspects of the modern Armenian condition are simply continuations of this period and should be studied in these contexts. Genocide is not the only reference to understand and explain the so-called modern Armenian diaspora.

Having said this, a parenthesis is in order at this point about things diasporic that are so much a part of contemporary Armenian literary and intellectual culture. Even though there is a very large time gap of seven to eight centuries, the critique of “things diasporic” that have been taken for granted should be reconsidered in more historic frameworks. There is another problem: Already in circulation for a long time, the concept of “diasporic identity” presupposes a distinction between two types of Armenian identity, each peculiar to a different type of experience—one “on a/the native land” and another “in dispersion/

outside the native land." In both cases, abstractions are made about these "identities" as related or not, to a/the native land. As in the case of most abstractions, we only seem to understand the exact connotation of and differences between these types of identities and related concepts, not because of their clarity, but precisely due to their ambiguity and emotional underpinnings.

Even though mobility, fragmentation, and decentralization marked Armenian history at least for the last millennium and earlier as well, the "diaspora" or the *Sp'iwik'* (in fact a legacy of Soviet Armenia—1921–1991—and the Cold War) and subtopics of immigrant communities are still extremely complex and poorly studied subjects. There is another problem: The literary record about this new diaspora is heavily laden with the tragic/heroic and death/resurrection motifs of the massacres that marked Armenian life in the Ottoman Empire from 1878 to the 1920s, including the Genocide during World War I. In other words, the concept is dangerously preconceptualized in dramatic and melodramatic terms. Centuries-old patterns of life and involvement on a vast Armenian *oikoumenē*, of which the "native" land was a fraction, have been overshadowed and almost forgotten.

On these grounds, the present Diaspora—rather, the life of Armenians in dispersion—is a cluster of expanding/shrinking communities throughout the world. Just as in the past, the factors in its evolution are local, economical–political, and have little to do with clear-cut ideologies of identity. There are surely an infinite number of issues involved in this condition, but only a few concepts are forced under stereotyped categories, such as *hayapahpanum* or *azgapahpanum* (preservation of Armenians or preservation of the nation), survival through memory (now based solidly on the Genocide), oral history (focusing mainly on survivors), supporting the Republic of Armenia independent once again, and surely Karabagh. During the early decades of the past century, when thousands of refugees settled in Arab countries, mostly mundane diasporan problems—such as schools, churches, associations, funds, poverty, prosperity, and so on—were dealt with in an extraordinary simplicity by both first- and second-generation survivors. I have the vivid examples of my ancestors and extended family, all remnants from both the east and west of the Armenian world in Asia Minor and further east in Iran. For these communities, the "homeland" or the *erkir* (country) was essentially the historic Armenian habitat, or the native land, which also included the Vilayets, Cilicia, and much more. It is not a definite "fatherland" (*hayrenik'*) with

clearly drawn borders. This was the nature of Armenian expansion, and they were natives in all places. The question is much bigger than a homeland; it is a human rights issue and recorded history.

This book stops at the early fifteenth century; however, a comment is in order at this point. In modern history, and as of the 1860s, earlier also waves of migrations, forced evacuations, and massacres drove thousands of people into the Arab Middle East, and some into Europe and North America. Already the Arab countries were parts of the Armenian habitat for more than a millennium. This is why the Armenians in these countries were welcome, looked upon, and saw themselves as “natives”—even when they were occasionally segregated against. They were given protection and citizenship and managed to evolve and prosper through very intricate manners of interacting with the environment, none of which were tragic or isolationist. The Prologue of the book, also included in this volume, briefly touches on these issues.

The record of literature and the arts of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was always and inevitably nationalist, because the period marked the awakening of national consciousness and a culture amid extremely difficult circumstances. However, the Armenian experience in the Islamic world goes back many centuries and the context is the broader history, not just Ottoman, Tsarist, and Iranian periods. Although the arts are very important to understand a period, they cannot be misunderstood for histories: New sources and testimonies, new paradigms should be probed for a fresh social history of Armenians. The genocide is surely a major paradigm, but not the only one.

In sum, the medieval and modern phases of Armenian history in the Near East are parts of a continuum and should be approached with a naked eye and independent of the narrow formats of the traditional rhetoric. Anyone who studies the social-cultural life of Armenians in pre- and post-Ottoman Asia Minor, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, and other countries of the region immediately perceives a peculiar sort of cultural-political energy, which sustained and oriented the processes even beyond the region into Europe and west of the Atlantic. Without a critical understanding of the historic factors that led to modern conditions, discussions about the so-called Diaspora may be limited.

During the *Intermezzo* of two centuries, there was another change as well, much before the final partition of the Armenian world into eastern and western parts between Safavid Iran and Ottoman Turkey

(in 1639, by the Treaty of Zuhab). I argue that already by the end of the twelfth century, there were distinct eastern and western Armenian worlds. Differences in the folklore, political, and religious cultures became conspicuous during the Cilician world. Gradually, two worlds and cultures developed by the necessities of different circumstances, enriching Armenian history and the people.

Radical changes during the eleventh century, in particular, had a bright side. In the 1030s, when the Turkic tribes began appearing in eastern Asia Minor, the population of the cities was at least partly and often mostly Armenian. I argue that these seemingly cataclysmic developments caused the rapid urbanization of Armenians, their exposure to other peoples, and the enrichment of the culture. In a relatively short time, new urban social classes developed. There were landowners, merchants, people of learning, craftsmen, entertainers, artists, and so on. Life in the newly developing cosmopolitan cities is another paradigm. One of the many ironies of Near Eastern and Armenian history is that during the tenth century and the next ones, the masterminds, instruments, and the victims of Byzantine politics were often Armenian. The other side of the irony was that in most operations against the Armenians and campaigns on the Muslim side during the tenth century, there were many Armenians who were not only in Byzantine armies but also on the Muslim side of the borders.

A major factor in the sudden proliferation of territorial lordships and warlords was the availability of large heterodox factions and individuals—mostly known as bandits, brigands, and outlaws—at large in the region at that time. These social types constituted their power base, as I try to demonstrate by specific cases. This is the background of extra-establishment Armenian power in Asia Minor, al-Shām, and Egypt. For example, perhaps for the first time, I discovered that the brigands of the Bēnē Ghazarik (mentioned by Michael the Syrian), the T'ondrakian clan of the “red dog Lazar” driven away by Grigor Magistros (around 1054), allied with the renegade Philaretus and eventually became the masters of Sewawerak in the region of the Euphrates. There are more such cases. When the Ghuzz and the Seljuks began their expansion, many militant heterodox groups joined them, converted to Islam, and enrolled in the campaign, gaining both power and territories of their own. Philaretus, the Dānishmandids, the Nāwikis, and the Banū Boghusaks are just paradigmatic cases in support of Armenian–Turkish realpolitik.

During these two centuries, Armenian–Muslim realpolitik stood in direct contradiction to the commonly adopted and implemented paradigms in Armenian and Near Eastern historiography. The Muslim–Armenian powers that appeared at this time present a radically different image of both the period and the Armenian experience with Islam. Based purely on practical considerations of survival and power, the realpolitik of these Armenians generated unprecedented models of political culture, vision, flexibility, and mechanisms of survival on non-native lands and among peoples of different faiths and cultures. The record of history is bound to put question marks on mainstream narratives.

I modestly claim to have outlined the background and historicity of at least five Muslim Armenian powers between 1060 and 1080 as essential phenomena for Armenian and Near Eastern histories. They were the Dānishmandids, the Banū Boghusaks, the “state” of Philaretus, the Nāwīqīs/Awāqīs, and the Fātimid Armenians. The emergence of the Rubenid Barony in Cilicia comes in this context and should be reviewed accordingly. As Cahen said, “never before had the Armenians played such a great part in the history of the Near East as they did at this time.”

As already mentioned, Armenian–Turkish realpolitik was an aspect of this phase. The Dānishmandids in Cappadocia—1055/447H–1173/569H—were referred to as Turks, even though their Armenian background was common knowledge. The Nāwikis, also known as the *Clan of Awag* (or Awak), were Ghuzz, Philaretus was an ally of the Turks and Kurds in this region and indeed converted. The case of the Banū Boghusaks is similar.

Despite these clear-cut cases, even some very credible scholars, such as Cahen, find it hard to accept the Armenian background of the Dānishmandids, for example. The problem comes from the application of modern criteria of ethnicity and nationalism to medieval cases. Ethnicity cannot be taken as a paradigm; religion also was a means to power. Political Islam superseded and absorbed these criteria. Cahen himself admits his failure to explain the mixed Christian and Muslim representations on Dānishmandid coins. What stronger proof does one need about the “twin-born” nature of these times and societies? Syncretism was indigenous to the region, as discussed in Volume One and other contexts in this book. Social–religious inconformity—often labeled as heresy—was another characteristic of the cultures of an already syncretistic region. Mysticism was another form of religious

and social dissidence. These choices in different communities inevitably created mutual sympathies between the Armenian sects and Muslims, including their heterodox trends, sects as of the eighth century. This was the case of the Paulicians and T'ondrakians, and their connections with the Babakians and later on, Irano-Islamic and Ismā'īlis.

The Armenian period in Fāṭimid Egypt, the subject of Chapter 3, was practically excavated from Arab sources. One of the intriguing aspects of this episode was the simultaneous involvement of both the Armenian establishment and heterodox and Muslim Armenians there. In other words, there were cases on both sides and an excellent opportunity for a comparative analysis. Were it not for the "orthodox" interval of Pahlawuni Bahrām's two-year vizierate, it would have been harder to trace and compare two opposed levels/styles of Armenian interaction with Islam.

Before the Armenian Period in Egypt, the career of the Muslim Armenian Amīr 'Azīz al-Dawlah, the Fāṭimid governor of Aleppo, was another discovery. I also suggested that the beginnings of Badr al-Jamālī were, in fact, in Aleppo, and surely he was among many in north Syria at the time. He was the Armenian ghulām Abū'l-Najm Badr, who was responsible for the murder of his master 'Azīz in 1022.

The vizierate of Badr al-Jamālī (1074–1094) and earlier on, his career as Fāṭimid governor in al-Shām initiated Armenian–Turkish rivalry for power. It became an aspect of the last century of Fāṭimid history. The Seljuks never gave up attempts to dominate Egypt, but as long as the Armenians were in power, the Caliphate survived, and the Turks as well as the Franks were kept out of Egypt. With the assassination of the last Armenian vizier Ruzzik, the mixed Kurdish–Turkish contenders for power penetrated the administration and put an end to the Fāṭimid Caliphate even before its demise in 1171.

The religious loyalties and politics of Badr and the other viziers are other peculiar aspects of their personalities and careers. In general, the manners in which he, an Ismā'īlī; his son al-Afḍal, a Sunnī sympathizer; his grandson Kutayfāt, an Imāmī; and the Nuṣayrī Ruzziks dealt with and manipulated Islam were extremely complex. Conservative scholars are of the opinion that the absence of minimal requirements of language and faith cancels the "Armenianness" of the Fāṭimid Armenians. However, the fact that Arab historians, even contemporary scholars, refer to these figures and factions as "Armenians" proves that their ethnic background was and still is the only requirement to be called such, at least as far as these historians are concerned.

There is also the peculiarity of heterodox religious cultures. These men were no doubt deeply spiritual people, but their religious zeal always lacked dogma. This was a major yet misunderstood aspect of Armenian heterodox spirituality. It meant and required a dismissal of all dogma and religious morality, except the belief in one, all-powerful, and just God. The only commandment they accepted was that of love, which they interpreted as being both physical and spiritual, but, more importantly, as an equalizing factor.

The point I make in this regard is that irrespective of their declared loyalties to different trends in Islam (Ismā'īlī, Shī'ī, Sunnī, and Imāmī), the Armenian identity of the heterodox and Muslim Armenians was granted, by both themselves and their environment. It is not difficult to see that these perceptions of ethnicity and national identity pose a challenge to the more common concepts of "Armenianness" based on the classic loyalties of faith and language that serve as preconditions.

As we study Fāṭimid history of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, we notice a very basic difference in the way in which the Armenians, Seljuks, and Kurds approached the new locations they settled in. The Seljuks regarded the entire region from al-Shām to Egypt as a land to be conquered and its people to be subjugated, whereas the Armenians worked for the re-enforcement of the existing structures not as invaders but as immigrants with a natural interest in their maintenance and improvement. No complaint of any sort was ever recorded against the communities. The Jamālīs, their troops, the Ruzzīks, and their men were lavishly praised for their contribution and just rule by most medieval Muslim sources, both medieval and modern. Even Yānis al-Armanī, the most modest among the viziers, was held in high esteem. The case of Bahrām was indeed a counter-paradigm, an anticlimax. Irrespective of their motives, the internal policies of these figures proved to be more beneficial for the caliphate itself and more altruistic in its consequences than any other socio-military faction could ever realize. The last section of this chapter takes up what I call the testimony of the architecture initiated and often built by the Armenians.

Chapter 4 on diverging paradigms during the twelfth to fourteenth centuries focuses on the case of Cilicia. The tenth century was known as the "Age of Kingdoms" on the historic land by the traditional nobility, whereas the eleventh and twelfth centuries were a period of Muslim-Armenian realpolitik and power by military people not from the nobility, and heterodox factions outside the historic land. Soon circumstances led to what I call a "Dynastic Triangle" that appeared

both on the native land and outside it during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, this time by a lesser but "orthodox" nobility. In these three locations, the patterns of Armenian interaction with both the Christians and Muslims took extreme and divergent forms. Only a holistic approach—as applied in this study—can detect and trace the peculiarities of this period without distorting it. Furthermore, contrary to common opinion, during the twelfth century, an Armeno-Turkish and generally an Armeno-Muslim community developed in Asia Minor, lower Mesopotamia, Egypt, al-Shām, and lower Mesopotamia. It was very common to find Christian ancestry and relations among the higher-ranking figures of all ethnicities. Similar to the Arab tribal amīrs earlier on, the Shah-i-Armans and the Seljuks married Armenian ladies of the nobility.

These Muslims absorbed and consciously adapted many aspects of life, arts, architecture, and folklore from the Armenians and the Greeks in the midst of whom they settled. Fāṭimid architecture was Armenized through Armenian builders, just as Seljuk architecture was.

Under both the Seljuks and the Mongols, the Armenian Church was still in a relatively good condition; even after the conversion of the Mongols around the 1300s, the Armenian culture and monastic institutions prospered.

Cilicia as a paradigm between the east and the west is the focus of chapters 4 and 5. The phenomenon was a part of the Armenian Intermezzo. When a few years before the end of the eleventh century the Crusaders appeared in the region finding natural allies in them, the Armenians in Cilicia allied with them. Much later, they saw interest in the alliance with the non-Muslim Mongols, whose subjects they became anyway, indirectly at least. This time around, their participation in the Mongol invasions into Muslim territories gained them further animosity.

I suggested that as an introduction to the study of the case of Cilicia, four points should be remembered about the Armenian condition at the time: the creation of a Christian-crusader style politics by Byzantines in the 970s; the motif of the "sword and cross"; the status of Cilicia as a "replacement" for the native homeland lost to the Byzantines; and the "diasporic" context of all things Cilician. The resumption of life in new circumstances and contact with western cultures drastically "modernized" Armenian political and intellectual culture. Almost immediately, deep differences in outlook and practice developed between western and eastern Armenians, or the Cilicians in the west and the Armenians

in the east. In general, diverging paradigms of interaction with Muslims as well as Latins characterized this period. Many details and episodes in this chapter provide grounds for this observation. One of these is the contrast between two Armenian projects in Cilicia and at the hands of Rubenid princes: the project of a Latin–Armenian kingdom and Prince Mleh's counter-project of a Zankī–Armenian kingdom. Already married to a lady from the Nāwīkī/Yāruqī clan, he was also connected to a militant Ghuzz faction of Georgian–Armenian background. Exactly hundred years after Philaretus, Mleh's was a second yet bolder experiment in view of heavy Frankish and Byzantine presence in the region. Putting a final end to Byzantine and Crusader involvement in coastal Cilicia, Mleh stood in direct contradiction to the pro-Latin Rubenid-Het'umid project.

There is another seemingly minor issue involved in the case of Mleh. In 1071/567H, while Cilicia was in precarious circumstances, Caliph al-Ādid, the last Fāṭimid Caliph, was assassinated, and the Ayyūbids initiated anti-Armenian persecutions. Many Armenians moved to Cilicia, now under pro-Muslim Mleh. Tens of thousands settled there, because Cilicia was the closest safe haven for them. It did not matter who ruled there. Just as in the past, fleeing before the Seljuks, many migrated to Fāṭimid Egypt where a powerful Muslim Armenian, Badr, was in control. Earlier on, in the north, another "renegade" Philaretus provided a safe haven to his compatriots. It should also be noticed that at this time, all three Armenian territories of the thirteenth century, Cilicia, Siwnik', and Erzuka, were under Mongol rule. In other words, most Armenians were the auxiliaries of the Mongols against the Muslims. The situation changed as of 1300, but still, this is an aspect of Armenian history at the time that, in turn, seems to be marginalized. The relationship between Armenian political evolution in the Islamic world and Armenian persistence is another intriguing yet understudied theme.

The project of the Latin–Armenian Kingdom and Byzantine pressures for church union, in a sense, "modernized" the Catholicosate in Cilicia and empowered it along ecumenical lines. The schism and the final break in 1441 should be reevaluated in these terms and not in narrow medieval as well as contemporary claims. The titanic figure of Nersēs Lambronac'i and his legacy are yet to be appreciated. It was Cilician pragmatism and openness to new ideas and perspectives that were responsible for the Silver Age of Armenian culture in the twelfth century. A renaissance of sorts began in Cilicia but under the

circumstances, it stood no chance. The Cilician condition between the east and the west had the seeds of both conflict and enrichment, and Cilician intellectual culture absorbed both. The Silver Age took shape amid conflict and rivalries and in response to them, it was ecumenical, pragmatic, tolerant, and vibrant. West Armenian culture developed on these bases and was and is still distinguished by these traits.

The legacies of major tenth-century figures, such as Narekac'i, Magistros, and Imastasēr, were understood and implemented in Cilicia. In fact, one can understand the tenth century by looking into the thought and literature of Cilician figures such as Martyrophil, Grigor III, Šnorhali, Lambronac'i, Grigor IV Tłay, and Řoslyn. I argued that the philosophical legacy derived from all the aspects of the literature and the arts qualify Cilician culture to be the single-most significant Near Eastern equivalent of the European Late Gothic and Proto-Renaissance phases. A comparison between the *Matean* of Narekac'i and Dante's *Divine Comedy* (written three centuries later) reveals surprising similarities.

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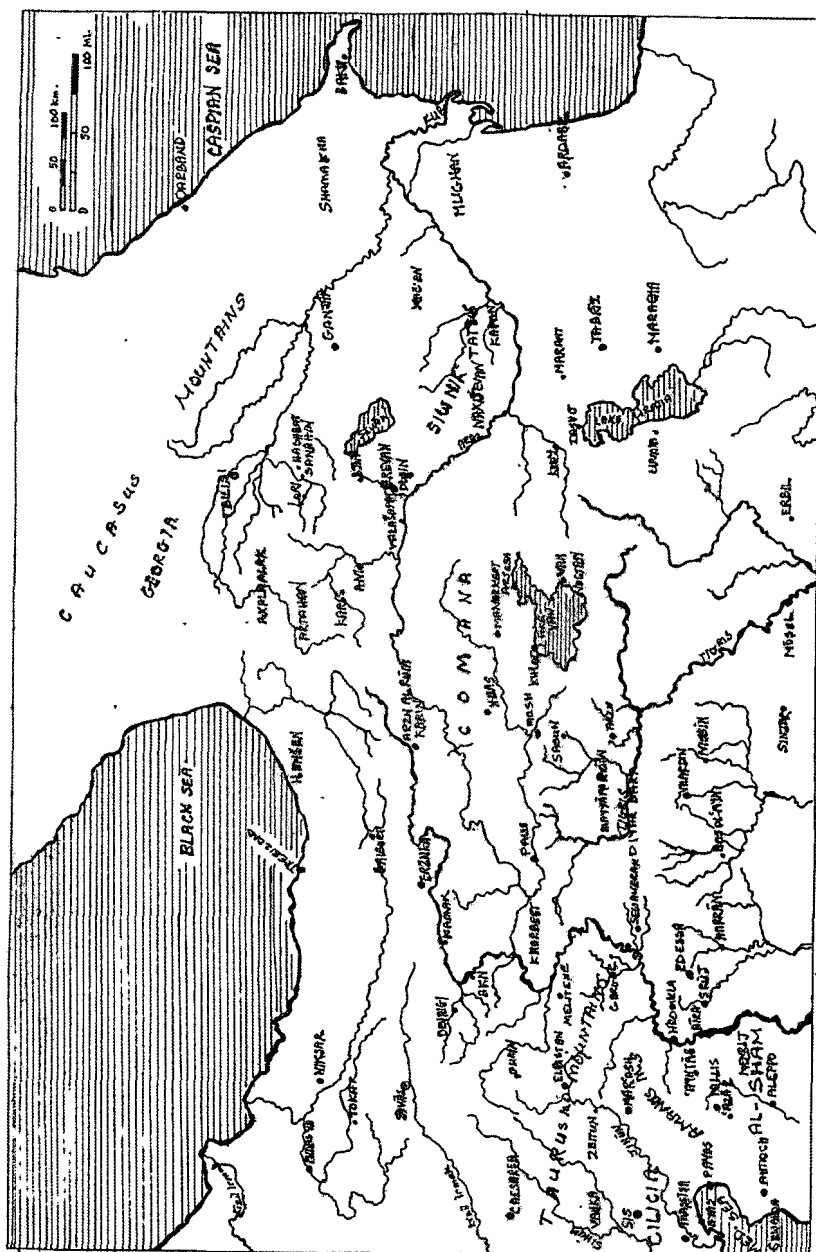
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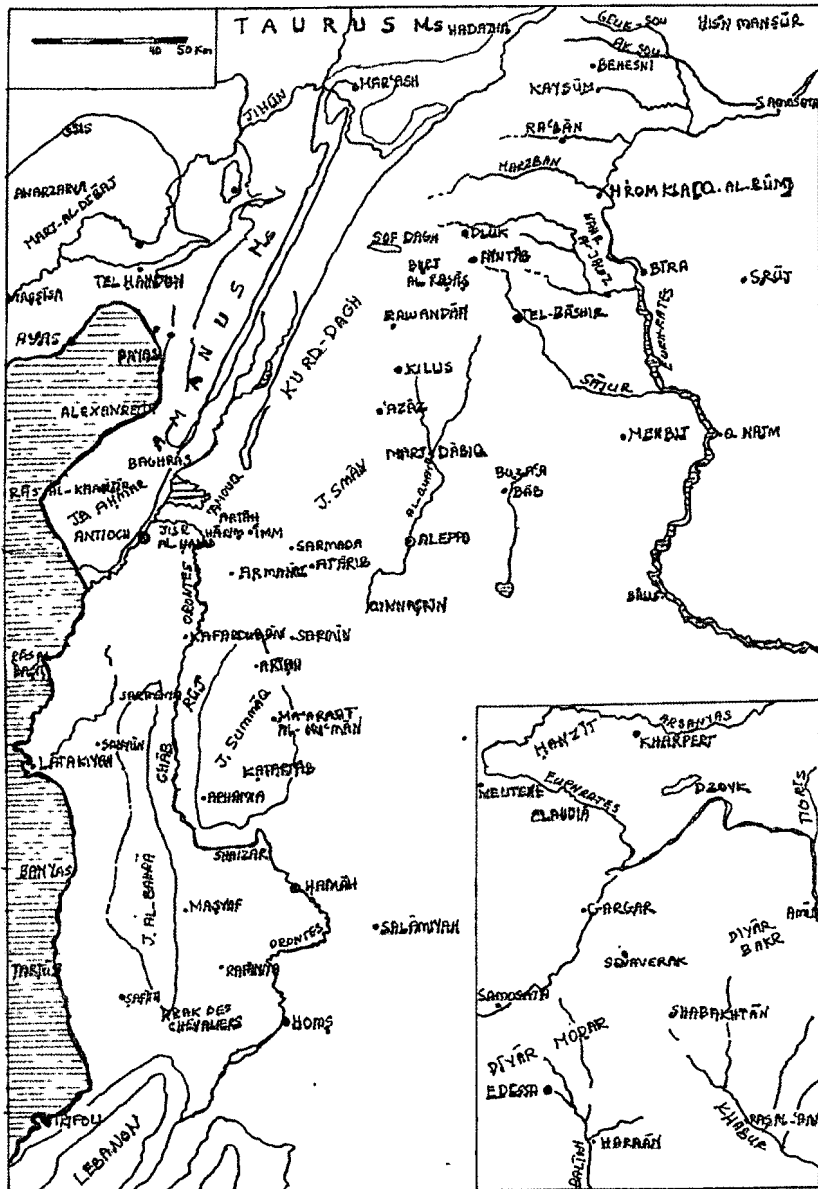
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Appendix

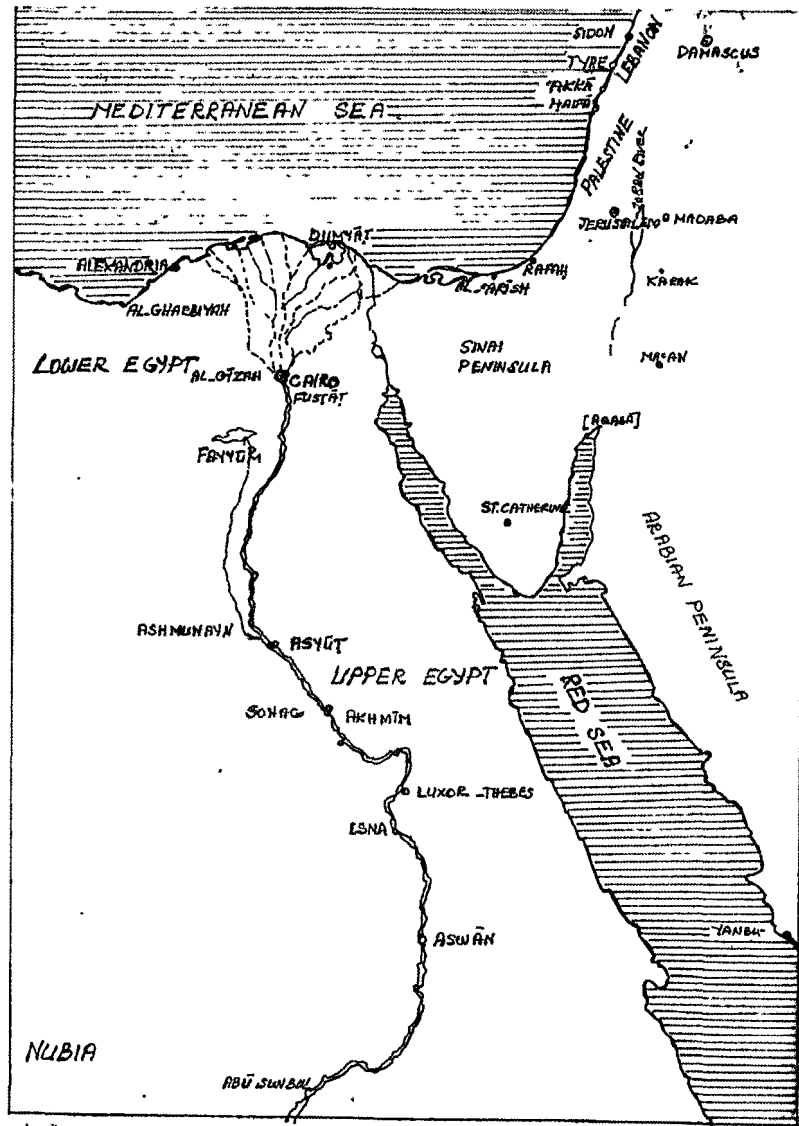
Map-1
Eastern Asia Minor—Eleventh–Thirteenth Centuries



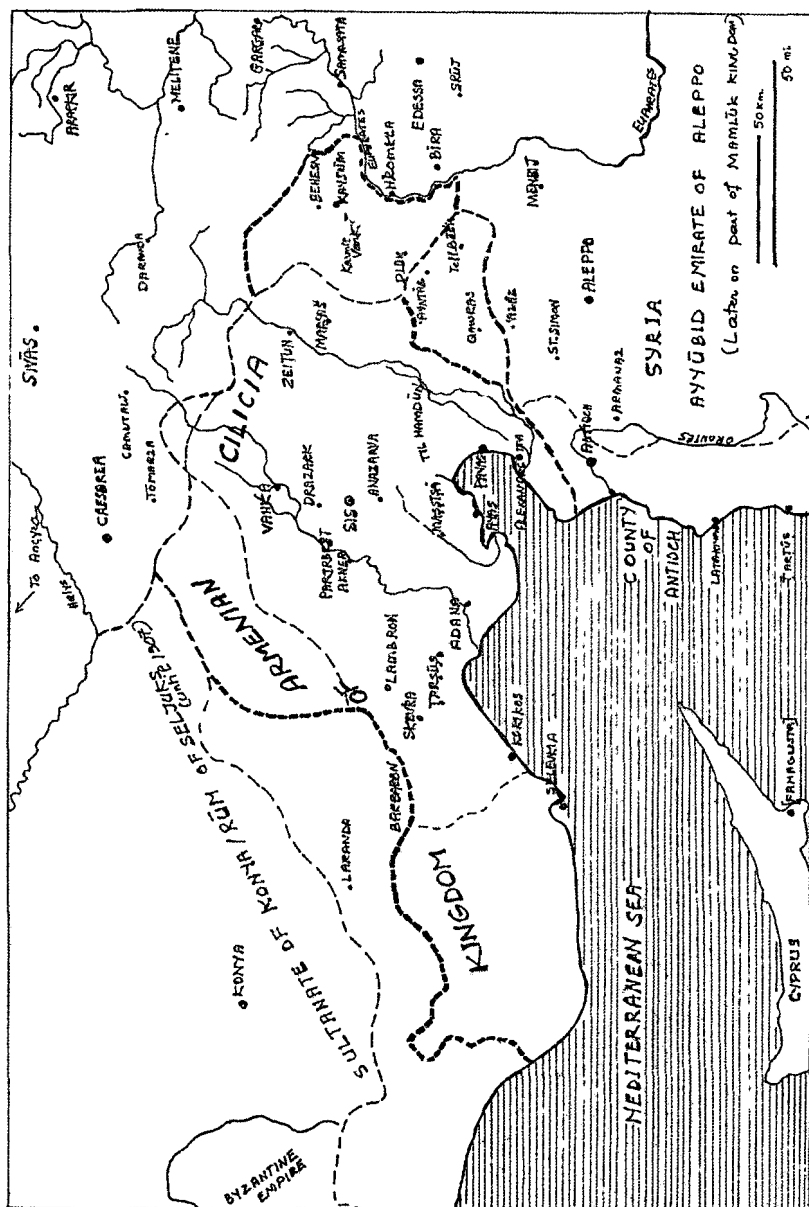
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Map-3
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